KING EDWARD VII

A BIOGRAPHY

King Edward VII
in the Robes of the Order of the Garter
1908

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KING EDWARD VII

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

SIR SIDNEY LEE

VOL. II

THE REIGN

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

When on 1st January 1925 the late Sir Sidney Lee appended his signature to the preface of the first volume of his Life of *King Edward VII*, he expressed the hope that the second volume, already "in active preparation," would be issued before the end of the year then beginning. That hope was not destined to be realised. Sir Sidney was even when he wrote unwell. During the course of the year the gravest symptoms manifested themselves, and Sir Sidney died on 3rd March 1926. In spite, however, of rapidly failing health, and in the midst of acute suffering, he continued throughout 1925 to labour at the second volume, hoping against hope that life and sufficient strength might be vouchsafed him to complete his great and responsible task. The work, however, proved to be beyond his power, and he had to leave it to be brought to a conclusion by others.

At the time of his death he had collected, from the royal archives and the other sources which he enumerated in the preface to his first volume, almost all the material necessary for the compilation of the second volume. He had sorted and classified this material; he had planned all the chapters and sections, and he had written considerable portions of his final narrative. In particular, Chapters I., II., IV., VI., VIII., and the Epilogue were virtually ready for the press. Moreover, even in respect of the chapters which were less complete, Sir Sidney had made himself master of his materials, and had reached conclusions which he had embodied in invaluable memoranda. Further, when he had realised that he was not to be permitted to finish his work, he had communicated to those to whom he bequeathed it his opinions and desires. Hence, although other hands than those of Sir Sidney Lee have had the duty of completing this narrative and of seeing it through the press, it is nevertheless his work, and as such it appropriately bears his name

Of those who have been responsible for the final form which the present volume has assumed, the place of pre-eminence must be assigned to Mr. S. F. Markham, M.A., B.Litt. of the University of Oxford. Mr. Markham joined Sir Sidney Lee as his assistant in June 1923, and he was intimately associated with him in the preparation of the first volume for the press. He continued to help him in the collection and arrangement of the materials for the second volume; and he became acquainted with all Sir Sidney's views and intentions. On Sir Sidney's death, he was commissioned to continue his work, and to complete it in the shape which Sir Sidney would have desired. Thus it fell to his lot, first, to examine and arrange all the documents and memoranda left by Sir Sidney; secondly, to add certain new materials which had become available since the publication of Volume I.; thirdly, to fill up by further reference to the royal archives various *lacunae* which Sir Sidney had perceived but had not had the opportunity to deal with himself; and, finally, to prepare the volume as it is herewith presented. Of the new sources of information which became available during the course of 1925–26 the principal items were the successive volumes of *Die Grosse Politik*; such books of reminiscences as are mentioned in the footnotes; the diaries of the Marquis of Lincolnshire and Sir Felix Semon; and, last but not least, translations from documents issued by the Soviet Government in Russia. We wish to speak in the most cordial terms of the efficiency and diligence with which Mr. Markham has discharged his important and onerous duties.

We also wish to express our thanks to that distinguished scholar, Dr. F. J. C. Hearnshaw, Professor of History in King's College, University of London, who has kindly gone through the manuscript and proof sheets and has given Mr. Markham the benefit of his experience and learning.

We feel sure that Sir Sidney Lee would have wished to renew his cordial thanks to the many distinguished statesmen and others mentioned in the preface to his first volume, without whose invaluable aid no adequate biography of King Edward could have been compiled. In addition to these our thanks are due to Dr. H. W. V. Temperley for valuable notes from the Foreign Office. We also desire to thank Mr. Emery Walker for his aid in preparing the illustrations to the volume.

In conclusion, we have to reiterate the remarks with which Sir Sidney Lee began his preface to the preceding volume, and to say that although His Majesty, King George V., has manifested the most gracious interest in the progress of this work, and has placed without restriction the archives both of Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace at the disposal of the author and his coadjutors, he is in no degree whatsoever responsible for any statement which is made, or any opinion which is expressed.

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THE ACCESSION

I

AT half-past six on the evening of Tuesday, 22nd January 1901, Queen Victoria passed away at the advanced age of eighty-one years and eight months. Although the event was not unexpected, and was clearly in the order of nature, it came as an unprecedented shock to the majority of the British people then living. The great Queen had held her exalted office so long that popular fancy had begun to regard her as immortal. Only septuagenarians could remember her predecessor on the throne, and in the sixty-four years which had elapsed since her accession, she had become something more than a monarch; she had become an institution, an enduring symbol of the majesty of her people, and an emblem of the unity of an empire which comprised more than one-fifth part of the habitable globe.

When Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, the British monarchy had sunk low in the estimation of the world. Her coronation was apologetic in its simplicity, and the prophecy was current that it was the last which Westminster would witness. Long, however, before the end of her reign, the Queen had restored the prestige of her position, and had made the Crown both respected and beloved. Her character—which combined in a remarkable degree a clear intellect, a firm will, a sensitive sympathy, a high integrity, and a strong moral purpose—had been the main agent in this rehabilitation, and men felt that the popularity of the monarchy was in no small measure due to the personality of Victoria herself.

The fact that her death occurred within a few weeks of the turn of the century, when the thoughts of all reflective minds

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were concentrated upon the achievements of the past and the uncertainties of the future, tended to accentuate the general consciousness that the passing of the great Queen marked very distinctly and emphatically the end of an age and the dawn of the new era. A mighty link between the past and present had snapped. Every one felt that a catastrophe had occurred, and looked with anxiety upon the man who by virtue of his birth was to succeed to Queen Victoria's place.

Never before in English history had the fulfilment of the destiny of an heir-apparent to the Crown been so long delayed. The Prince, who was born into his heritage, had reached the mature age of fifty-nine years, two months, and thirteen days before he ascended the throne. His mother became sovereign in her nineteenth year, and the average age at which his predecessors had assumed the office of monarch was well under thirty. Only one English sovereign had succeeded to the throne at so advanced an age, viz. William IV., who was sixty-five on his accession in 1830. George IV. indeed was fifty-eight before he came into his great dignity, but already for several years, as Regent, he had fulfilled the functions of royalty.

Doubts were felt in many quarters as to whether the new successor to the throne was fully prepared for his responsibilities. Rumour spake none too well of him, and there were some misgivings even in his own circle as to his fitness for his long-postponed vocation. His mother's refusal to delegate to him any of her great responsibilities through her long reign was held in many quarters to have withheld from him information and experience which were necessary for the due performance of the royal function. Some prophets argued that pleasure had been his main occupation and that it would be with difficulty that he would adapt himself to the calls of business. There had been little to show the unobservant public that he took a deep and serious interest in national affairs. He was regarded as a *bon vivant*, and there was a fear that the manners of the Regency might be revived. Even *The Times* (January 23, 1901) pointed out that

> . . . there is no position in the world more difficult to fill than that of Heir-Apparent to the throne. It is beset by more than all the temptations of actual royalty, while the weight of counteracting responsibility is much less directly felt. It must

be with a feeling akin to hopelessness that a man in that position offers up the familiar prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." Other men may avoid much temptation, but the heir to a throne is followed, dogged, and importuned by temptation in its most seductive forms. It is not only the obviously bad that he has to guard against; he must also steel himself against much that comes in the specious garb of goodness and almost with the imperious command of necessity. The King has passed through that tremendous ordeal, prolonged through youth and manhood to middle age. We shall not pretend that there is nothing in his long career which those who respect and admire him could wish otherwise. Which of us can say that with even approximate temptations to meet he could face the fierce light that beats upon an heir-apparent no less than upon a throne? As is pointed out in an appreciation of the new King which we print to-day, the Prince of Wales in all his public relations has been as unique among those who have occupied the same position as was his mother among sovereigns. He has never failed in his duty to the throne and the nation. . . .

There were many who echoed these sentiments in stronger terms, and who, like the Irishman, predicted that the new monarch "wouldn't be the king his mother had been"! Few knew the breadth of interest, the knowledge of men and affairs which he had surely and steadily acquired during the longest heir-apparency in English history, but many knew that he was a fascinating companion, charming by his bonhomie and geniality. All who came into contact with him realised that he had the vital elixir of zest. To whatever he applied himself he gave his whole heart; he did it with every nerve and fibre. He was a supreme man of the world, shrewd and benign, though quick to approve or condemn. He had friends in almost every country in the world, not least in his own country. But men wondered whether these qualifications were sufficient to sustain the burden of the Crown. The contrast between the characters of mother and son was so great as to give rise to grave fears concerning the future trend of the British monarchy. That King Edward would be popular there was no doubt, but whether he would be a wise king and a great king was a question that few dared to answer when he ascended the throne.

Within a very few months, however, as we shall see, all such prognostications were triumphantly refuted, fears were allayed,

and doubts assuaged. Few monarchs have more speedily manifested a supreme fitness for their high and responsible office.

II

Within twenty-four hours of Queen Victoria's death, her heir's accession to the throne was solemnised with the prescriptive rites. The next morning (January 23) the new King travelled from Osborne to London in order to attend a meeting of the Privy Council at St. James's Palace, there to take the oaths of sovereignty. Before the King entered the council chamber, the Duke of Devonshire, in the presence of the Privy Council, of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, and of a few private secretaries who deputised for the general public, formally announced the death of the Queen, and the Clerk of the Council read the King's proclamation announcing his accession. Immediately afterwards the King entered the room, and the Archbishop of Canterbury administered the customary oaths. The King then delivered an address which augured happily for the coming reign. He had thought over the general trend of his deliverance while on the journey from Osborne, but had committed nothing to writing. Nor had he taken counsel in any quarter as to what he should say. Before the Queen's death he had privately made up his mind that on reaching the throne he would drop the first of his Christian names—Albert—and would assume exclusively the style of his second Christian name—Edward. To this change of designation he now gave voice. But his first reference was to the death of his beloved mother, at which he nearly broke down; but he recovered himself with a tremendous effort, and spoke for eight minutes without a single note. The speech, as afterwards reported, ran as follows:

This is the most painful occasion on which I shall ever be called upon to address you.

My first and melancholy duty is to announce to you the death of my beloved mother, the Queen, and I know how deeply you, the whole nation, and I think I may say the whole world, sympathise with me in the irreparable loss we have all sustained.

I need hardly say that my constant endeavour will be always to walk in her footsteps. In undertaking the heavy load which now devolves upon me, I am fully determined to be a constitu-

tional sovereign in the strictest sense of the word, and, as long as there is breath in my body, to work for the good and amelioration of my people.

I have resolved to be known by the name of Edward, which has been borne by six of my ancestors. In doing so I do not undervalue the name of Albert, which I inherit from my ever-lamented great and wise father, who by universal consent is I think deservedly known by the name of Albert the Good, and I desire that his name should stand alone.

In conclusion, I trust to Parliament and the nation to support me in the arduous duties which now devolve upon me by inheritance, and to which I am determined to devote my whole strength during the remainder of my life.

This simple, dignified, and sincere utterance made a deep impression on those present. Some Councillors standing near the King presently asked him for his manuscript, in order that copies might be sent to the press, no reporters being present, but the King informed them that he had none to give, and expressed surprise that no shorthand note had been taken of his speech. His words, however, had struck his hearers so forcibly that some intimate friends among them, notably Lord Rosebery, Lord Carrington (now Marquis of Lincolnshire), Mr. (afterwards Sir) Almeric Fitzroy, and Lord Redesdale, had little difficulty in recalling the King's phrases, though the *ensemble* was "nothing like so good as the speech which the King actually delivered," in which "the original words were full of dignity and pathos." [1] The King endorsed the quickly prepared précis of his speech; but the spontaneity of the performance suggested a sense of responsibility and a possession of powers for which some of his hearers were unprepared.

The public proclamation of the King's accession under the title of King Edward VII. was recited in traditional phraseology the next day, by the officers of the Heralds' College, in front of St. James's Palace, at Temple Bar, and at the entrance to the Royal Exchange, as well as in all provincial cities by the Mayors. Queen Victoria had herself been present at St. James's Palace sixty-four years earlier when she was proclaimed Queen, but she had expressed a wish that her successor should not follow her example in this regard, and the new King was not present to hear his accession popularly acclaimed.

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

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The King's accession in no wise interfered with the continuity of government. Hitherto a dissolution of Parliament had followed six months after the accession of a new sovereign, but that regulation had been repealed by the Reform Act of 1867. For the first time in English history the existing Parliament remained undisturbed by the change in the tenure of the Crown, and Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister since 1895, together with the ministry in the revised form which he had given it some six months earlier, remained in office.

With the leading ministers now in office the King had long been closely associated He had a wholesome respect for Lord Salisbury, though he differed from him on many matters. With Lord Lansdowne, the recently appointed Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who was four years his junior, the King's relation was of old standing, both socially and politically. Although their connection had not been wholly without jars, and their interests were not wholly identical, they were on familiar terms with one another. The King's chief friends in the cabinet were the Duke of Devonshire, the Lord President of the Council, with whom he shared many sympathies outside politics, and Lord Londonderry, the Postmaster-General. But the most prominent member of the Unionist ministry was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had attracted the King's interest nearly thirty years before when he was the hope of the Radical party. Mr. Chamberlain was then for millions of Englishmen the "red peril." He had toyed with republicanism, had advocated a "universal Godless education," and held views on other subjects that alarmed even the left wing of the Liberal party. But by the close of the 'eighties he had become an eminently respectable imperialistic Liberal-Unionist, and from 1895 he had been Colonial Secretary in Lord Salisbury's ministry. He was a highly accomplished and self-possessed debater, possessed of all parliamentary arts, and his short incisive speeches, plain and practical expositions devoid of rhetoric, were always timed for the right moment. There was careful deliberation in all that he did; his so-called indiscretions were the result of judgement aforethought. When rebuked he was "unrepentant and unashamed"—a cool unruffled figure with a masklike face and

exasperating smile. The King was attracted by this scintillating product of the Midlands and had had many conversations with him. Since Chamberlain had developed imperialist principles the King had identified himself with the minister's aspirations, though the bond between them was always political rather than social.

In accordance with the provisions of an Act of 1708 (6 Anne c. 7), which enjoins the assembly of Parliament immediately and without summons on the demise of the monarch, both Houses met on the same day as the Privy Council, and during that and the next day the members took the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign. On 25th January an address of sympathy with the Crown on the King's and the nation's bereavement, and of congratulation to the King on his accession, was voted with solemn unanimity. The Prime Minister spoke feelingly in the House of Lords of the new King's popularity: "He has been," he said, "familiar with our political and social life for more than one generation, and he enjoys a universal and enormous popularity. Moreover, he is loved in foreign countries and foreign courts almost as much as our beloved Queen was." In the House of Commons, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the leader of the opposition, in seconding the address, laid stress on the new sovereign's manifold public services which he had rendered to practical schemes for the benefit of the country, and confidently anticipated increased efforts for the promotion of the people's welfare. He was the only speaker to mention Queen Alexandra—a reference that was loudly cheered by both sides of the House.

Some innovations attended the accession of the new sovereign. For the first time the title of "Emperor of India," which had been instituted by Act of Parliament in 1876, was assumed on a sovereign's accession. But it was deemed advisable to make an addition to the King's hereditary title which should graphically indicate the range of empire on which the Crown set the seal of unity. By inheritance the sovereign was "King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland." To this title Parliament added the phrase "and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas."[1] The suggestion had been made that the specifically imperial designation should take the less simple form

[1] Act 1 Edward VII. c. 15.

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of "and of all the Britains beyond the Seas," and the memory of the suggestion was retained on the new sovereign's coinage, on which the King was described, in addition to his other styles, as "Britt: Omn: Rex"—"King of all the Britains."

IV

In the ceremonies of Queen Victoria's funeral the King naturally acted as chief mourner. The Queen had drawn up precise directions for her sepulture in two papers dated respectively 25th October 1897 and 21st January 1898. Both were directed to the Prince of Wales, her eldest son, and to Princess Beatrice, her youngest daughter. In them she had expressed a wish for a military funeral, and her wishes were scrupulously respected.

On 1st February the body of the late Queen, which, since her decease, had lain in state in a *chapelle ardente* at Osborne, was conveyed to East Cowes in a coffin covered with a white pall, on which were placed the crown, orb, and sceptre. The King, with the members of the royal family, the German Emperor, and other mourners, followed the gun-carriage on foot. At East Cowes the coffin was placed on the deck of the royal yacht *Alberta*, and taken across the Solent through the long avenue of British and foreign warships which, with their flags at half-mast, fired a last salute in honour of a great Queen. The solemn passage from Osborne amidst the roar and boom of cannon was a fitting tribute to the Queen of the Seas The King, who was with the other mourners on the following *Victoria and Albert*, noticed that the yacht's royal standard was also at half-mast The Captain was asked for an explanation. "The Queen is dead, Sir," came the reply. "The King of England lives," was the answer, and the standard was hoisted mast-high ! [1]

On arrival in London the next day, the coffin was borne from Victoria Station to Paddington on a gun-carriage. Immediately behind it rode King Edward, supported on one side by his brother, the Duke of Connaught, and on the other side by his nephew, the German Emperor. They were followed by the Kings of Portugal and Greece, most of the Queen's grandsons, and members of every royal family in Europe. The aged King of the Belgians,

[1] *Review of Reviews*, April-May 1925.

Leopold II., followed in a carriage. In the military procession which accompanied the cortège every branch of the army was represented. On arrival at Windsor Station the coffin, with the Union Jack and the regalia, was again placed on a gun-carriage, and the procession started for the Castle. The artillery horses, however, proved too restive for the occasion, and were replaced by a naval guard of honour. The funeral service took place with imposing solemnity in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

On Monday, 4th February, the coffin was removed to the calm and beautiful Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore, the King again walking in procession with the rest of the royal family. The whole route from the Castle was lined by crowds of people in mourning, who thus paid their last respect to a beloved sovereign. At Frogmore Queen Victoria was laid to rest by the side of the husband she had so deeply loved.

Throughout the funeral ceremonies the King's nephew, the German Emperor, was at his side. The Emperor's brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, and also his son, the Crown Prince, were in the mourning company, and it is noteworthy that almost the first act of the King's reign was the public proof he gave of his good relations with his royal kinsmen of Germany. It had been Queen Victoria's intention to invest the Crown Prince, her great-grandson, with the Order of the Garter, but at the time the King (then Prince of Wales) thought it "far better for the young Crown Prince to pay the Queen a visit when she is able to receive him, than that the Garter should be sent out to him to Berlin either by a member of the Royal Family or by a special mission."[1] On 28th January the King carried out his dead mother's intention by investing the Crown Prince with the coveted order, addressing to the young man what the latter described as "an exceedingly warm-hearted and kinsmanlike speech." "I was then," he added, "on the threshold of my twentieth year, and my great-uncle seemed, from what he said, to feel a sort of responsibility for my welfare."[2] At the same time the King made the Kaiser a Field-Marshal of the British Army, and Prince Henry of Prussia a Vice-Admiral of the Fleet. Three weeks later (February 19) the distinction of the Hon. G.C.B. was bestowed on the Crown Prince of Sweden and Norway, and on

[1] Prince to Sir Frank Lascelles, January 8, 1901.
[2] *Memoirs of the Crown Prince of Germany*, p. 81.

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the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, who were representing their respective countries

One royal kinsman, however, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, stayed away on failing to obtain from the King an assurance that he would be given a better place of precedence than had been accorded him on the occasion of his presence at the Diamond Jubilee, when he was treated as a kinsman of a reigning Prince rather than as a sovereign in his own right.[1] German quidnuncs assigned the friction to the regard of the English court for Prince Ferdinand's predecessor, Alexander of Battenberg, and anticipated British complications with Bulgaria which might turn out to the advantage of Germany. By way of indicating his view of what he described as "a painful episode," Prince Ferdinand spent the day of the funeral in celebrating Prince Boris's birthday with a military review and a gala luncheon.

The Kaiser, during the course of his visit, although the occasion was one of bereavement and mourning, took the opportunity of having several political conversations with the King and with the newly appointed Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne. The Kaiser flattered himself that the King and he were in complete accord on foreign affairs, and Baron von Eckardstein, the Secretary to the German Embassy, decorously echoed the prevailing opinion.

"Not only between the Kaiser and the King," he wrote from Osborne to the German Foreign Office on 28th January, "but also with the Queen and the rest of the family there exists a full and sincere understanding. At to-day's state reception, at which the Crown Prince received the Order of the Garter, the King spoke in sincere tones of the intimate relations between himself and the German royal house, and expressed the hope that these relations might bring a closer contact between the two great nations which is necessary for the common cause of peace and the work of civilisation. At the conclusion he called special attention to the fact that the spontaneous departure of the Kaiser to visit the sick-bed of the Queen as well as his staying in England for the funeral had awakened not only in family circles, but in the English people as a whole, a deep and lasting impression of gratitude and respect.

"The Kaiser told me that he had long conversations on politics

[1] His father was first cousin of both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort See *infra*, p 268.

with the King, and both were in complete agreement. The King has now a strong aversion both to Russia and to France, and expressed himself on this matter in the sharpest of words. When the Kaiser drew the King's attention to the fact that there were symptoms of an American-Russian rapprochement, he became very serious and declared that such a coalition would prove a great danger to Europe. . . .

"In his conversations with Lord Lansdowne, as also with the King, the Kaiser debated various political questions only from the academic point of view. Lord Lansdowne first spoke to him of the old question of the balance of power among the European nations, which lay in England's hand. The Kaiser retorted that the balance of power now rested with the 22 German army corps, that England was no longer in a position to isolate herself as in former years from the rest of Europe, but must move together with the continent. . . ." [1]

The Kaiser remained in England throughout the funeral ceremonies, postponing his departure until 5th February. On that day he lunched at Marlborough House with King Edward, about forty people being present. When the meal was over the King proposed the health of his nephew in most cordial terms, and thanked him most heartily for being here instead of presiding in Berlin, on 27th January, at his own birthday celebrations. In reply the Kaiser, after expressing his gratification at the "magnificent" reception accorded to him on all sides, continued:

I believe there is a Providence which has decreed that two nations which have produced such men as Shakespeare, Schiller, Luther, and Goethe must have a great future before them; I believe that the two Teutonic nations will, bit by bit, learn to know each other better, and that they will stand together to help in keeping the peace of the world. We ought to form an Anglo-German alliance, you to keep the seas while we would be responsible for the land; with such an alliance, not a mouse could stir in Europe without our permission, and the nations would, in time, come to see the necessity of reducing their armaments.

Unfortunately the report of the German Emperor's speech, which appeared in the *Court Circular* on the following day (February 6), was scanty and inadequate, owing to the absence of an official reporter, with the result that the Kaiser was

[1] Baron von Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James's*, p. 191; *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. No. 4986.

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annoyed at the reception given to his fraternal words. He subsequently made it a grievance against the King and his government that his words were unreported in the English press At the close of the luncheon the Kaiser had bestowed on Lord Roberts the Order of the Black Eagle, an action that caused the King to express the shrewd fear that it would excite the wrath of the chauvinist party in Germany, and that the militarist press would once more attack England. The anticipation proved quite true. The Kaiser's approaches to the country now ruled by his uncle were promptly disavowed by German public opinion, and, as had often happened before, the Kaiser's enthusiastic friendliness for England, which his attendance at his grandmother's funeral had encouraged, rapidly flagged on his return to Berlin.

V

From friends and acquaintances at home and abroad the King received innumerable letters of condolence and congratulation. From St. Petersburg came a tenderly phrased note from the Tsar (January 16/29).

"I can so well understand," he wrote to his "Dearest Uncle Bertie," "how hard this change in your life must be, having undergone the same six years ago. I shall never forget (the) kindness and tender compassion you showed Mama and me then during your stay here." Of his "beloved Grandmama" he had cherished affectionate memories since he first saw her on his visit to England for the Duke of York's marriage: "I felt quite like at home when I lived at Windsor and later in Scotland near her." Then, turning to political questions, the writer concluded. "I am quite sure that with your help, dear Uncle Bertie, the friendly relations between our two countries shall become still closer than in the past, notwithstanding slight frictions in the Near East. May the new century bring England and Russia together for our mutual interests and for the general peace of the world."

Similar sympathetic messages came from the President of the French Republic, and from other courts and republics, and to these the King replied in a cordial vein. To these letters were added those from high officers of state who had been in the habit of corresponding in a private way with Queen Victoria. Lord

Curzon, the Viceroy of India, writing from Calcutta on 24th January, asked if he should continue to send the fortnightly letters, chiefly about Indian princes and peoples, which he had written to Queen Victoria. Dr. Randall Davidson, then Bishop of Winchester and Clerk of the Closet, asked if he should continue the confidential recommendations for Church appointments which he had been in the habit of offering the late Queen. To these and to all similar queries the King replied that he wished the correspondence to be maintained.

In the stress of new conditions the King did not forget the friends and attendants of the late Queen, and with the help of his sisters he selected many articles which had been in personal use by her for distribution among them. To Lord Salisbury he sent (February 18) a seal; to the Tsar he forwarded a miniature of the Tsaritza which the Queen, her grandmother, had greatly prized—" It will always remind me of beloved Grandmama, as it was one of her own things," was the grateful reply (March 23/April 5). Mr. Joseph Chamberlain acknowledged a like souvenir of the late Queen as " a striking proof of the kind thoughtfulness and consideration which have ever marked Your Majesty's relations with all who have had the honour of approaching you," and the many other recipients sent cordial messages of gratitude. Thus within the first few days of the reign the King had given indications that whilst he intended to maintain all the privileges and duties of his high office, yet at the same time he would not forget those who had been his friends during his long heir-apparency.

VI

In accordance with courtly tradition the King announced his accession to his fellow-sovereigns in Europe by means of fully accredited special missions, and he made careful choice from among his personal friends of the envoys who were to carry his cordial messages to the various foreign courts. Earl Carrington (afterwards the Marquis of Lincolnshire), the King's lifelong friend, was selected for France, Spain, and Portugal. But Lord Carrington, as a staunch Liberal, hesitated to accept such a mission from the hands of the Conservative government; and it was not until it was pointed out that he would go in the specific rôle of a personal representative of the King, and not as a

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representative of the government, that he very proudly accepted the mission. On 17th March Lord Carrington had an audience with the King before setting out on his embassy. The King, "who complained of the cold and was not looking at all well," gave detailed instructions to his envoy and told him to report fully the incidents of his mission[1] Lord Carrington carried out his instructions faithfully, and at his reception in Paris there occurred one of those incidents which, although it passed almost unnoticed at the time, did not a little towards the ultimate creation of the Anglo-French entente. Before the King's envoy left London, Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, warned him of the possibility of a not very cordial reception in Paris, where Boer sympathies ran high. The forecast was unverified in the event, and at the Élysée, where President Loubet, "a simple, sincere sort of man," invited Lord Carrington to lunch, both the President and the Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé—"a sharp, clever, dark man of about forty-five, sociable and civil"—pressed Lord Carrington to let the King know that France was anxious for a good understanding, and M. Delcassé begged him "to assure the King that no effort would be spared on his part to foster and maintain happy relations between France and England. He insisted on this more than once." The occurrence was repeated at the state dinner on 20th March, when the President of the Republic told Lord Carrington, "I and my Ministers would consider it a crime if any one, I care not who, were to make mischief between France and England Please tell your King this, and say I said so" Lord Carrington at once noted down the President's words on his menu, and the message when duly delivered to the King made a powerful impression on his mind.[2]

At Madrid and Lisbon Lord Carrington was equally well received, and on his return to London on 7th April he was invited to Windsor to give his report. The King was pleased at friendly messages that were sent by the French President, and was touched by the Queen of Portugal's gratitude about the generous forgiveness of the Duc d'Orléans by Queen Victoria.[3]

"I told the King," Lord Carrington relates, "that my impressions of Paris were very favourable and that President

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] See Vol. I. pp. 781-2.

Loubet and all his Ministers were more than civil, willing and anxious to talk openly on every subject, and that I felt certain that there would not be much difficulty in coming to a very friendly understanding with France if Ministers so desired.

"I also said that his (the King's) immense personal popularity in Paris would go a long way to smooth the path for this if it was thought worth while. I said that I could tell him all this plainly: but that it would be difficult to say as much to Lansdowne, for if I said as much to him as I said to His Majesty, he would think that I was trying to make out my Embassy had been a success. His Majesty said I had better put my impressions before Lansdowne, and let him judge for himself. This I did with discretion." [1]

Both the King and Lord Lansdowne were impressed by the pregnant words of M. Loubet and M. Delcassé, and though for the moment nothing followed, they were remembered a few months later when efforts to secure an Anglo-German understanding proved unavailing.

For Belgium, Bavaria, Italy, Wurtemberg, and the Netherlands the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe was selected; and for Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Saxony, and Russia the Duke of Abercorn, who as Lord Hamilton had previously been a member of the King's household, was chosen. The Duke's reception in Berlin and St. Petersburg was all that could be desired. The Kaiser treated the Duke and his companions as his guests, and extended to them unusual honours.

"We have just," he wrote to the King on 10th April 1901, "had the great pleasure of entertaining the gentlemen of the Special Mission which you kindly sent here in order to announce your accession. They made an excellent impression here and were most respectfully treated by the public. We are doing our best to make them feel comfortable and at home in Berlin, where none of them has ever been before!! and I have already had the great satisfaction of hearing from Captain Hamilton's own mouth that, notwithstanding his having a height of nearly two yards, yet his bed was really long enough! To-day the gentlemen were able to be shown some military drill and the new barracks of the Alexander Grenadier Guards. . . ."

The Tsar likewise expressed to the King his pleasure at making the Duke of Abercorn's acquaintance, and his pride and

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

happiness in putting on the uniform of the Scots Greys in which to receive him.

The veteran Lord Wolseley was selected for Austria, Turkey, Greece, Rumania, and Serbia, and the King took some exception in March to Lord Lansdowne's reproof of Lord Wolseley in a debate in the House of Lords on the ground that such "a passage of arms" might discredit the Field-Marshal in his capacity of special envoy to foreign courts. Like Lord Carrington, Lord Wolseley at first hesitated a little as to the acceptance of the mission. He pleaded the Royal Commission, before which he would have to give his evidence, argued that his day was over; that a younger man would better adorn the duty; that he was prone to fatigue. But the King gracefully insisted; the date could be made to suit his convenience; so distinguished a soldier could not be excused from so important an errand; every arrangement would be made to facilitate his journey, and from the sovereigns he was to visit he would receive an honourable welcome. Wolseley was charmed with the royal insistence.

"My reception at Marlborough House," he wrote to Lady Wolseley, "was most cordial. I made my reverence and kissed the kingly hand in due form. I sat with him for half an hour, and he told me to take my baton and to wear the Collar of the Bath and the ribbon of St. Patrick at my formal interview with the Emperor of Austria. I was to address him in French if he did not speak English. I am to present the heir to the Crown with the Collar and Order of the Bath at a special interview. The King spoke much about the Emperor's misfortunes. The King of Rumania, he said, was a queer fellow. His wife is a poetess, and they are seldom together. The King of Servia had made, he said, a curious mésalliance, having married his father's mistress! Of the King of Greece he spoke very nicely; there he said I was to speak English. He asked me to write to him from each court, which I promised to do."

The result proved King Edward to be right. Wolseley thoroughly enjoyed his tour; the warmest greetings awaited him from the monarchs, and the richest jewels—for his family as well as for himself—from the Sultan.[1]

In his letters from Vienna Lord Wolseley described to the King in a lively strain the pleasant terms in which the Emperor

[1] *Life of Lord Wolseley*, Maurice and Arthur, pp. 335-6.

Francis Joseph spoke of the King, but how uncertain the destiny of Austria-Hungary looked when the Emperor should die: "Beyond, all is cloudland." From Bukarest on 3rd April he wrote favourably of the Rumanian army; from Belgrade four days later he sent an amusing character sketch of the King and Queen of Serbia, and from Constantinople he reported (April 13) the anxiety of the Sultan, a despot of keen intelligence who was showing an undue partiality for Krupp quick-firing guns, for a close alliance with England. The Sultan pressed on Wolseley a case containing ten thousand Turkish cigarettes for King Edward. The King was delighted with Lord Wolseley's vivacious reports, and listened with keen interest to his further comments on his return to England.

Each one of the envoys brought back the most cordial wishes from the sovereigns they had visited. When Queen Victoria ascended the throne only one European monarch, King Leopold of Belgium, knew her at all well, but King Edward on his accession was known to them all, and was on cordial terms with almost every one of his royal contemporaries.

VII

Several plans which were on foot before the Queen's death fell to her successor to carry out. Among these was a proposal which the government had made in 1898 that the Duke of York (now King George V.) should make an extended tour to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. King Edward, when Prince of Wales, had warmly welcomed the Canadian and American tour, but had somewhat doubted the advantages of the Australian expedition on account of the distance. In a letter to Lord Salisbury, dated 19th January 1899, he thus expressed his opinion:

Before speaking to the Queen on the subject of a visit to Canada this summer by the Duke and Duchess of York, I will certainly follow your suggestion and consult Mr. Chamberlain when I come up to London for the meeting of Parliament. The proposed visit would be to Canada in order to open the new bridge at Montreal, and the visit to the United States afterwards would be in the light of visiting a great friendly state. The visit to Australia would have taken at least six months, while the proposed one would not take much longer than two months.

But the subsequent passage through Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth Bill for the federation of the various Australian states led Mr Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, to urge that the Duke and Duchess of York should open the first Commonwealth Parliament at Melbourne in May 1901. The late Queen had assented with enthusiasm to the proposal, and the King, then Prince of Wales, had concurred, but in the first grief of bereavement the King was loath to part at an early date with his son for a long period, and he asked Mr Chamberlain whether the Australian visit could not be postponed till the following year. Lord Salisbury, however, insisted that the Duke of York must fulfil his promise to open the Federal Parliament, and the King accepted the situation.

Preparations for the colonial visits of the Duke and Duchess of York were rapidly completed, and the King and Queen attended their departure from Portsmouth on 16th March. The Duke and Duchess landed at Melbourne on 6th May, and next day opened the Federal Parliament amid every sign of popular enthusiasm. At the opening of the proceedings the Duke read a telegram from his father: "My thoughts are with you on the day of the important ceremony. Most fervently do I wish Australia prosperity and great happiness."

The extended colonial tour was a great success, and on the return of the Duke and Duchess to England on 1st November the King announced to Lord Salisbury his intention of creating the Duke Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, "in consequence of the admirable manner in which my son has carried out the arduous duties which I confided to him in representing me during his recent visit to the Colonies."

"It was not," the King wrote on the following day, "without some natural anxiety and hesitation that I sanctioned the departure of the Heir-Apparent to my Throne on a voyage which involved many months of separation. But it was my earnest desire to give effect to the wishes of my late revered mother and to the aspirations of my loyal subjects in the Colonies, of whose devotion and patriotism I had received such signal proof in the splendid service they had rendered to the Empire in South Africa, and I am fully repaid by the complete success which has attended the visit."

Thus to his mother's memory the new King paid in all sincerity every tribute of filial respect.

But in one respect the King was confronted on his accession by a matter which called for all his tact and powers of exercising in combination both authority and persuasion. Queen Victoria had during her lifetime expressed more than once her desire that Balmoral Castle and Osborne House, in which so great a part of her life both before and after the Prince Consort's death had been spent, should remain "the appanage of the British Crown." Osborne in particular was intended to be a family possession, in which her children should all have some participation. So far as Balmoral was concerned King Edward had no hesitation in complying, because a residence in Scotland was a necessity, and the sporting advantages of the estate were particularly welcome to him. But Osborne House was quite different. Here in a most attractive situation in the Isle of Wight, in close touch with the great seaports of Portsmouth and Southampton, Queen Victoria had erected a mansion, which was in some ways her favourite residence, and in which she passed the last days of her life. To the original mansion, known as the Pavilion, there had been added a huge wing for the accommodation of guests and servants, and later on a smaller wing was added for the convenience of H.R.H. Princess Beatrice and her family. The house had been constructed at great expense, much of which had been lavished upon its decoration, which was for the most part in the style so much admired in the days of the great International Exhibition of 1851, but which had become somewhat repellent to the ideas of the artistic world fifty years later. But even if King Edward could have appreciated the unimaginative dullness of mid-Victorian artistry, neither he nor Queen Alexandra had any desire to add a fifth royal residence to the already heavily burdened royal exchequer. With Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle as their state residences, and Balmoral Castle and Sandringham as their private homes, they felt that Osborne would be a luxury not lightly to be borne. The King, however, was divided in his mind between his intense respect for his mother's wishes and the difficulty of using this particular property in the way which Queen Victoria had intended, and finally settled the problem by a judicious compromise. The central portion of the house, the Pavilion in

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which Queen Victoria had breathed her last, should, he decided, be reserved as private and kept *in statu quo* as a memorial; but the other buildings should be employed in some way so as to be of some practical use to his family or the nation. He consulted his son and heir, the Prince of Wales, and ascertained from him that in no circumstances would the Prince and Princess think of residing at Osborne. It soon became evident that Osborne was likely to become a white elephant unless it could be made of practical use to the nation. Various schemes for its utilisation were therefore brought before King Edward's notice, chiefly through Lord Esher. Two of these schemes appealed to the King's mind. Owing to the decision to abandon the old training ship *Britannia* at Dartmouth it was considered advisable to transfer the naval cadets to some more suitable place of training on land, and Osborne seemed to be admirably suited for this purpose, both the open Solent and the busy Medina shipyards offering part of the environment requisite for the training of naval cadets. The King therefore adopted the suggestion that the existing stables on the Osborne estate and the adjoining paddocks should be devoted to a new Naval College for Cadets, where they would obtain a better and more healthful training than had been possible on board the *Britannia*. To the Board of the Admiralty the offer was at the time particularly welcome, as no other place was immediately available.

Another long-needed requirement was brought before the King's notice. Officers employed on active service abroad were very frequently sent home in an invalid condition from tropical diseases, often too ill to go to their homes, sometimes with no homes immediately open to them. Only the general naval and military hospitals at Netley and elsewhere were available for these sufferers, who for the most part needed complete rest. The great wing of Osborne House seemed to be well adapted for conversion into a hospital for such purposes, and the idea was welcomed by the King. After careful investigation it was decided to offer to the nation the portions of the property required to meet these two schemes, and the subsequent rearrangement of the two main buildings afforded the King the greatest interest, and received his personal supervision throughout.

Meanwhile King Edward had to cope with a severe remonstrance made by his sisters, who called his attention with some vehemence to the disregard of their mother's wishes as conveyed by her last will. The King was not unprepared for this opposition, but it required all his tact, with some use of kingly authority, to appease it and to justify the changes.

After long negotiations with the government the gift took effect on Coronation Day 1902, and was confirmed by Act of Parliament in the following December. At the time of the gift the King wrote to the Prime Minister:

Under the will of the King's much-beloved mother, the Osborne Estate is, as Mr. Balfour is aware, the private estate of the sovereign.

Having to spend a considerable part of the year in the capital of this Kingdom and its neighbourhood at Windsor, and having also strong home ties in the county of Norfolk, which have existed now for nearly forty years, the King feels that he will be unable to make adequate use of Osborne as a royal residence, and accordingly he has determined to offer the property in the Isle of Wight as a gift to the nation.

As Osborne is sacred to the memory of the late Queen, it is the King's wish that, with the exception of those apartments which were in the personal occupation of Her Majesty, his people shall always have access to the house which must ever be associated with her beloved name.

As regards the rest of the building the King hopes that it may be devoted to national purposes and be converted into a convalescent home for officers of the Navy and Army, whose health has been impaired in rendering service to their country.

If in order to give full legal effect to the King's wishes it is found that an application to Parliament is necessary, the King trusts that Mr. Balfour will see that the necessary steps are in due course taken.[1]

VIII

The King's first public function as sovereign was to open on 14th February 1901 the new session of Parliament and to read the Speech from the throne. The ceremony associated the sovereign in direct and public fashion with Parliament, which,

[1] A year later, on 4th August 1903, the King opened the new Royal Naval College at Osborne, and thereafter took a keen interest in its activities and progress.

in practice, was the supreme ruler of the country. Queen Victoria had broken with tradition by frequently absenting herself on the occasion—a royal breach with custom which Mr Gladstone always regarded as a dereliction of public duty. The last time she had opened Parliament in person was fifteen years before, in 1886, and in the preceding five-and-twenty years she had performed the ceremony only six times. King Edward was determined that the custom should now be resumed in the full panoply of state—a resolve that was evidence of his intention to renew all outward and visible signs of his central place in the Constitution. He also decided to renew the well-accredited practice of personally reading the speech from the throne which had been dropped by the Queen in 1861, and with his own lips read the speech to the members of the two Chambers who were crowded into the House of Lords.

A suggestion had come from the leader of the House of Commons that, owing to the narrow limits of the House of Lords and the absence of suitable accommodation there for members of the House of Commons, the ceremony should take place in Westminster Hall. But the King held that he was traditionally bound to perform the ceremony in the same place as his predecessors had done, and strongly expressed the wish that all the ancient ceremonial should be renewed. A Select Committee was subsequently appointed to consider Mr. Balfour's proposal, but in view of the King's wishes it was decided (June 28, 1901) to make no change other than to place more seats in the House of Lords.

Although King Edward was thus tenacious of the old traditions, in one respect he detected that the old ceremonies incident to the first appearance of a new sovereign before his Parliament had grown obsolete. Before reading the speech from the throne he was called upon by the Lord Chancellor, in accordance with the Bill of Rights of 1689, to repeat a Declaration from the throne repudiating the doctrine of transubstantiation, and asserting that "the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint and the sacrifice of the Mass as they are now used in the Church of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous," and to make a vow that the Declaration was made "without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatever, and without any dispensation past or future or possibility of it from the Pope or

any other authority." The King read these compulsory words, which he regarded as a gratuitous insult to his Roman Catholic subjects, in a low tone, resolving that no successor to the throne should submit to the torment which he had suffered of pronouncing from the throne a clumsy and antiquated denunciation of the religious belief of a substantial section of his subjects. His objection was due to his rooted faith in the principle of toleration, and not to any leanings towards Roman Catholicism. Thus when the King received from Cardinal Vaughan the next day a protest against the Declaration, he forwarded it to the Prime Minister. In reply, Lord Salisbury pointed out the many difficulties in the way before the offensive Declaration could be removed. The Act of Parliament of 1689 which sanctioned this Declaration could not be modified except by another Act, which there was not time to pass as yet. That day, however (February 15), the cabinet acknowledged, after full discussion, the desirability of some change, and the King, on receiving a notification to that effect, promptly wrote to the Prime Minister (February 17, 1901):

I am very glad to learn from your letter of the 15th instant that the Cabinet fully discussed the Declaration I had to make from the Throne on the 14th inst., and I entirely agree with them that it is not in accordance with public policy of the present day. It will, I hope, be the last time that I, or any of my successors, may have to make such a Declaration in such crude language.

For the moment matters of more pressing importance intervened, and it was not until the summer that the government faced the difficulty which the ancient Declaration presented. The King detected in the government's delay a lukewarmness which was out of harmony with his own pronounced views. Finally, on 13th June, a Committee of nine peers was appointed, including the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister, and they decided on a new form of Declaration which, in spite of qualifications of the old wording, retained so much of it that it still remained a flagrant challenge to Roman Catholic beliefs. Before the report embodying this lame conclusion was submitted to the King it was published on the authority of the Lord Chancellor. The King (June 30) naturally wished to know why he had not been informed of the result of the Committee's

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deliberations. Lord Halsbury, in reply, apologised somewhat lamely for the oversight, and earned the rebuke from the King (July 10) that he was "naturally much surprised that he had received no intimation, previous to his having read it in the newspapers, of this Report, as it was an important matter concerning the Sovereign regarding which he ought to have been consulted."

Three days earlier the King had written to Lord Salisbury calling his attention to the disagreeable feeling caused on all sides by the Declaration in February, and urging that "for the future it should be shorter and confined to his determination to uphold the Protestant faith, of which he is a member, and avoid those expressions which have caused such discontent, not only to his Roman Catholic subjects, but to many others besides." On 9th July he added that "As this Declaration is a matter which affects the Sovereign very closely he hopes no steps will be taken in any future proceeding and that the Government will come to no decision respecting the precise words to be used without his being previously consulted," and he concluded the letter with the terse remark that "It ought surely to be dealt with this Session or there may be agitation in the Country. Thanks to the Lord Chancellor's bungling from the beginning" The new form of Declaration profoundly dissatisfied the King. He pointed out that neither the Archbishop of Canterbury nor any Bishop was on the Committee—an impolitic exclusion which was "rather a slight on the Bench." His view was that a polemical discussion should be avoided and that the whole question should be referred back to an enlarged Committee—a course which both the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple) and Lord Rosebery had urged in the House of Lords on 8th July, when Lord Salisbury declined to concur. A similar fate met the proposal of Lord Grey on the same day that the Declaration should be completely abrogated, and here the King and Lord Salisbury saw eye to eye. Finally, however, the government decided that the Committee's Report should be embodied in a Bill to be introduced into the House of Lords, where any suitable amendment might be moved and adopted.

On 16th July the King repeated to Lord Salisbury his wish to "give no handle for a 'No Popery' agitation," though he was anxious to rid the Declaration of matter objectionable to Roman

Catholics. Lord Salisbury, however, insisted on presenting the Bill as it stood to the independent vote of the House of Lords, though he stated that he would adopt any amendment of the majority, and might possibly bring in a new Bill during the next session.

The unsatisfactory Bill was read a second time without change on 23rd July, and was approved by ninety votes to six. Subsequently, on 1st August, Lord Rosebery again moved to refer the Bill to a new Select Committee, a motion which although it received the support of both the Primate and the Duke of Norfolk, was rejected, and various amendments of the wording of the Declaration shared a like fate. The Bill, still in its original shape, passed the third reading in the House of Lords, but the dissatisfaction with it was so general that it was not introduced into the House of Commons, and so died a natural parliamentary death.

The mismanagement of this business strongly reflected on the government, and to the King's chagrin no substantive effort was made during his reign to retrieve the position, though Lord Grey, on 25th June 1903, made an abortive attempt to introduce a Bill for the abolition of the Declaration, and a year later, on 1st July 1904, the Duke of Norfolk moved that the Declaration should take such a shape as to condemn no specific Catholic doctrine. But Protestant opinion was strong against so emasculatory a change, and the Duke's suggestion was rejected.

There the matter rested, and King Edward's successor took the oath in its old form. But the government of that date was more resolute than its predecessor to purge the wording of grave offence to Catholics, and in 1910 a Bill was passed through both Houses of Parliament which abolished the old Declaration of 1689 and substituted for it the following form of words:

> I do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare that I am a faithful Protestant, and that I will according to the true intent of the enactments to secure the Protestant succession to the Throne of My Realm uphold and maintain such enactments to the best of my power.

The Bill passed its third reading in the House of Lords on 4th August 1910, three months after King Edward's death.

The unhappy delay in removing so manifest a blot from the ceremony attending the formal recognition of a new sovereign was attributable in the first place to the failing powers of Lord Salisbury, and subsequently to the pressure of parliamentary business and the desire to avoid creating public controversy. But the episode illustrates an obvious weakness in the procedure of constitutional government.

IX

One of the first commissions to be appointed after the death of Queen Victoria was the usual commission to inquire into the position, chiefly financial, of the new occupant of the throne. The three members of this commission were Mr. Balfour, Sir William Harcourt, and Sir John Blundell Maple—the last named having been appointed as a business friend of the King's. While the commission was sitting, Sir Francis Knollys, the King's Private Secretary, entered the room. "Gentlemen," he said, "it is my happy duty to inform you that, for the first time in English history, the heir-apparent comes forward to claim his right to the throne unencumbered by a single penny of debt." Gossip had erroneously credited the new King with immense liabilities in excess of his assets, but the popular rumour had failed to take into account his efficient business instinct, which, despite his love of pleasure and of comfort, and his sense of the dignity of his position, did not permit his expenditure seriously to exceed his revenue. Nor was allowance made for the expert financial advice which he had at his disposal in the inner circle of his friends. But while it was true to say that the new monarch had no debts, it was also authoritatively stated that he had no capital! Queen Victoria's pecuniary fortune was distributed among the younger members of her family, and it was to the country that, in accordance with precedent, King Edward looked for an income which should be adequate to the dignity of his office. Queen Victoria on her accession had, like her predecessor, William IV., accepted the principle that the chief hereditary revenues of the Crown, which came from landed property, in effect belonged to the nation, and, like his mother, the King at once relinquished the royal

claim to them.[1] During the Queen's reign the annual value of these Crown estates had risen from £245,000 to £425,000. The Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, however, were outside this arrangement, and had remained in the personal possession of the royal family—the income of the Duchy of Lancaster being reserved for the use of the sovereign, while that of the Duchy of Cornwall was reserved for the use of the heir-apparent. No attempt was made in 1901 to change this settlement. Each of the royal Duchies produced £60,000 a year, and the sum derived from the northern duchy passed at once to the new King and that from the southern to his son and heir, the Duke of York. With his accession to the throne the parliamentary grant of £40,000 annually to him as Prince of Wales, which dated from his marriage in 1863 and had remained unaltered, ceased, and in the absence of a new parliamentary grant his revenues from the Duchy of Lancaster constituted his sole income. The Act of 1889, which provided for the quarterly payment to him of £36,000 a year for his children, lapsed according to its terms six months after Queen Victoria's death.

The procedure which was adopted in order to determine the pecuniary provision to be made by Parliament to the King and his family followed the usage of 1837, but there was a general understanding that the terms of the settlement should preclude the reopening of the question during the King's reign.

On 5th March 1901 a royal message in the traditional language invited the attention of Parliament to the question. Already in February the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, sketched in a letter to the King the general lines which he thought the Civil List might follow. He proposed to raise the royal income from the £385,000 (including £60,000 for the Privy Purse) which Queen Victoria had received to £450,000, with the privilege of franking letters and sending telegrams free of charge on matters relating to the business of the state. It was proposed to increase the contingent annuity for Queen Alexandra to £60,000. With regard to the King's four surviving children, now that the arrangement of 1889 had lapsed, the income

[1] George III. for the first time surrendered a large portion of the revenues from Crown lands in return for a fixed annuity granted by Parliament. George IV. yielded a larger portion, and the fixed annuity was proportionally increased. William IV. was the first sovereign to give up all the Crown lands save the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall.

of the heir-apparent, who was in receipt of £60,000 a year from the Duchy of Cornwall, was to be made up to £100,000 by a parliamentary grant of £40,000 The Duchess of York was to receive an annuity of £10,000 a year and in case of widowhood £30,000, while Princesses Louise and Victoria and Princess Charles of Denmark, the King's daughters, were each to receive £6000.

To these proposals the King signified his assent, and on 11th March 1901, on a motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, an investigating committee of twenty-three members, representative of all shades of opinion in the House, was appointed.

It was nearly half a century since the royal household and its administration had been overhauled, and the King readily assented that inquiries should be held into the departments of the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Steward, and the Master of the Household. The King took a keen interest in the reduction of expenses. He was resolute in urging the reduction of the salaries of the parliamentary members of the Household from £10,700 to £7700, and insisted (March 14) on the reduction of the salary of future Treasurers, Comptrollers, and Vice-Chamberlains of the Household to £900 and £700, adding that he would not entertain the old figures, and he approved the suggestion that the Lords-in-Waiting should be reduced from eight to six. There was not a little dismay in certain circles at the King's determination to exercise economy.

The committee, as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach wrote to the King on 21st March, went very thoroughly into the proposals, and struck out the salary and wages of the Master of the Buckhounds and the expenses of the hunt, though they added a corresponding sum to the expenses of the Lord Steward and Lord Chamberlain's departments, their idea being that the Mastership of the Buckhounds should not be continued as a political office and that there should be nothing in the Civil List indicating any idea on the part of Parliament that the royal hunt should be maintained at all.

With these amendments the government's proposals were approved by the committee on 9th May (Mr. Labouchere alone objecting) and were brought before Parliament. Here, in Parliament, Mr. Keir Hardie showed himself to be an unsuspected ally of Queen Alexandra. The joint Privy Purse for the King and Queen had been fixed at £110,000. Mr. Keir Hardie now moved

(June 1901) an amendment to fix the Privy Purse of the Queen at £50,000. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in defending the joint Privy Purse availed himself of the King's permission to point out that the Queen's share of it was £33,000. There was no attempt at serious opposition in debate, the amendments and speeches in support of them being practically confined to Messrs. Labouchere and Keir Hardie, who in the numerous divisions against the Bill were only supported by the Irish Nationalists and a few Radicals. The Act authorising a Civil List of £470,000 per year, with additional pensions and annuities bringing the total up to £543,000, was passed on 25th June 1901, and the Civil List as then determined remained unaltered during the King's reign, though not without a challenge on the part of the Treasury in 1907. In the March of that year Sir Edward Hamilton, Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, raised the question of the expenses of political visits to England. It had always been the rule, during the King's reign, that the state should bear the expense of the official visits to England of a crowned head. But now the Treasury raised the question of the validity of such charges being borne by the state. The King's Private Secretary promptly took up the cudgels on behalf of the existing arrangements and wrote to Sir Edward Hamilton (March 20, 1907):

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It was *without doubt* a distinct agreement that the expenses of state visits paid to this country by foreign Sovereigns should be borne by the state, and it is too bad of the Treasury, six years afterwards, to endeavour to throw uncertainty on the validity of this agreement. The Treasury may, however, be assured that the King will not give in on this point, and if it is persisted in I hope His Majesty immediately on his return will send for the Prime Minister and tell him he will not stand such an attempted evasion by the Treasury of what was agreed upon in 1901.

To this threat of action by the King, Hamilton replied (April 1) that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not upset the arrangement of 1901, but he asked

that in future these special grants shall be a little more regularised, that is to say, that when you consider a Crowned Head's visit to be a state visit, that is of political importance, you or Probyn should write a line to him, which he could refer officially to the

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. If you will kindly bear this in mind for future use, I don't see that there is any need for troubling the King

To this Lord Knollys replied (April 3) that:

As I understand it, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would decide what visits were of "political importance" and what not, and the Treasury would only pay for the former

His Majesty has, however, his own views respecting the importance, from a political point of view, of visits of Foreign Sovereigns to this country, which might not coincide with those of the Secretary of State. Were, for instance, the visits of the Kings of Portugal, Greece and Norway, of "political importance," and does the approaching one of the King of Denmark come under that category?

I am tolerably certain that the King would answer in the affirmative (not because, I need hardly say, he would benefit financially by giving this answer, but because he would really think so), whereas for all I know the Secretary of State might consider that they were not, or at all events not all of them, of "political importance."

If the proposal in question were, therefore, to be carried into effect, there might be constant conflicts between the King on one side and the Treasury and the Foreign Office on the other.

Altogether independent, however, of this objection, there remains the principal one that an agreement is an agreement, and I know the King will regard it as being very unfair that there should be any attempt to disturb it especially after it has been in existence for upwards of six years

Knollys' arguments had effect, and the agreement of 1901 was left undisturbed.

CHAPTER II

THE KING AND THE CONSTITUTION

I

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CONSTITUTIONAL theorists of greater or lesser standing have found much difficulty in deciding the functions and powers appertaining to a constitutional monarch, and more so in Great Britain where there exists no written constitution to define his position. An inquiring foreigner reading the *London Gazette* for the first time would at once imagine that England was under an efficient despotism, that the King was invested with absolute personal power. To outward appearances it is the King who distributes all the great offices of state: the patronage which governs affairs ecclesiastical and temporal is apparently solely in his hands; foreign policy is determined in his name; it is he who appoints ministers, opens and prorogues Parliament, and who is the source and fountain-head of all acts governing the realm.

Yet if this inquiring foreigner were next to turn his attention to the British press, he might imagine that the Prime Minister and not the King was the despot. He would see that, although the people claimed the right of legislating through majorities, a committee of the representatives of the electoral majority is the sole executive government of the state, and the chairman of this committee, the Prime Minister, is alone vested with powers that have the colouring of despotism. Nominally, the Prime Minister and the other ministers of state are the King's servants: in point of fact they are his masters. When the King decrees that this or that appointment shall be made he speaks in the voice of his Prime Minister, and in practical effect all laws are made by decree of Parliament which it is beyond his power to modify or reject. Constitutional purists often insist that the constitutional sovereign

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is a mere automaton moving at the will of his ministers, and they define constitutional sovereignty in broad terms as the antithesis of personal or arbitrary sovereignty. Every constitutional king has to assent in his public capacity to much which is obnoxious to him in his private capacity. As Bagehot says: "He must sign his own death warrant if the two houses unanimously send it up to him." The constitutional monarch reigns, but does not govern; he has little power although great influence, and he respects the laws and customs which deprive him of arbitrary power of action.

The truth would seem to lie between these two views. In practical application any theory of a constitution is bound to experience modification. Large measures of home policy, which are usually framed to meet the exigencies of party politics, may commonly be withheld from royal influence, but there are many other acts of government which an active sovereign may and does influence. The extent depends on his energy, his ability, his courage, and his intellect, and the unity or disunity of his ministers. There is no authentic blue book to say what he may and may not do. In popular theory, although erroneously, he is regarded as an "Estate of the Realm," a separate co-ordinating authority with the Lords and the Commons.

In point of fact, the Crown does more than it seems, and though the personal superintendence of the government may hardly be possible for a king, there is no reason why he should not make a personal study of affairs of state, criticise his ministers' advice, and offer suggestions. When a king is obviously able, no constitutional rules will render him a cipher in the affairs of state.

II

To a large degree the history of the English monarchy has been a history of the restriction of the sovereign's individual power, though the ancient forms which credit the sovereign with sole supreme power in the state have been retained. In the Middle Ages English monarchy was limited, and might be described as constitutional, nevertheless the Tudor and Stuart regimes proved that the constitutional principles were capable of evasion, even while the constitutional machinery was maintained. But the reassertion of the old principle of parliamentary government

finally in the "Bill of Rights" in 1689 gave Parliament the first place and put the King under its sway. Since that date the title to the Crown has been based entirely upon parliamentary enactment.[1] King Edward was King by virtue of an Act of Parliament.

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Since the re-establishment of parliamentary government, successive English sovereigns have taken different views of their functions under the constitution. William III. was his own foreign minister and commander-in-chief. Queen Anne took an active personal interest in the business of state, frequently presiding over cabinet councils, attending debates in the House of Lords, and even on occasion originating measures herself. She regarded it as her special right to appoint ministers according to her own choice and from any party, though this principle was in direct conflict with the principle of party government. George I., who was possibly no better acquainted with the British constitution than he was with the English tongue, learnt to

[1] At the present day it rests upon the Act of Settlement of 1701, which provided that, in default of heirs of William and of Anne, the Crown should pass to the Electress Sophia, and the heirs of her body, being Protestants.

The rules of descent are, in the main, the same as those for the inheritance of land at Common Law: that is, the title passes to the eldest son; or, if he is not living, through him to his issue, male or female, as if he had himself died upon the throne. If the first son has died without issue, then to, or through, the eldest son who is living, or leaving issue, then to, or through, the daughters. But any member of the royal family lawfully descended might, by the will of Parliament, be chosen to succeed to the vacancy created by parliamentary decision on the death of the sovereign. *Cf.* Lowell's *Government of England* and Dicey's *Law of the Constitution.*

The birth of a daughter to the present Duke and Duchess of York emphasises this point. At present this infant is third in succession to the throne, and if the Prince of Wales remains unmarried and the Duke and Duchess of York have no sons, she would ascend the throne next after the Prince and the Duke—thus coming before her uncles, Prince Henry and Prince George. But if she has a sister, a decision would have to be made between them. The question has already arisen twice. When Edward VI. died without children it was by a special Act of Parliament passed in the reign of her father, Henry VIII., that Queen Mary succeeded before her sister Elizabeth. And when James II. forfeited his crown for himself and his son by flight, it was by right of conquest, as the wife of William, that Mary II. and William took precedence of her sister Anne, and not because she was the elder daughter. Thus neither of these events is held to have settled the question of the order of succession of sisters.

The present succession (1927) to the throne is as follows:

The Prince of Wales.
The Duke of York.
Princess Elizabeth of York.
Prince Henry.
Prince George.
Princess Mary.
Master Hubert Lascelles.

accustom himself to a system of government under which William III. had been constantly checked, and both he and his successor, George II, showed more interest in Hanoverian than in British affairs. By contrast, George III.'s slight acquaintance with history and his very slender stock of general information did not prevent him from emulating Bolingbroke's "Patriot King" by taking a foremost part in the direction of state policy. It was only after Lord North's fall and Pitt's accession to power that it could be said that the person who decided the policy of England was, generally speaking, not the King, but the Prime Minister. The advent of Pitt marked the end of personal rule.

The process initiated by Pitt was carried further during the course of the next century owing to the bad character of George IV., the weakness of William IV., and the voluntary seclusion of Queen Victoria. This process was assisted by the development of the strict party system, which inevitably tended to reduce the sovereign's individual power. In the "Golden Age of English Politics" Mr. Gladstone, while expressing a reverence for the throne, habitually ignored Queen Victoria's incessant protests against his political actions, both executive and legislative, and on his advice she repeatedly had to sanction measures of which she disapproved. She made no secret of her reluctance and resentment, but could meet her minister's compelling counsel only with impotent prognostications of disastrous consequences. Many times did she write to a minister that "*Never* would she consent" to this or that proposal: yet her formal signature of approval was always at his service at the needful moment. Mr. Gladstone held the old Whig idea that a constitutional sovereign was a mere automaton, giving automatic sanction to the decrees of his or her ministers. As he wrote in 1878:

> The ideas and practice of the time of George III., whose will in certain matters limited the action of the ministers, cannot be received otherwise than by what would be on their part nothing less than a base compliance or shameful subserviency dangerous to the public weal and in the highest degree disloyal to the dynasty. It would be an evil and a perilous day for the Monarchy were any prospective possessor of the Crown to assume or claim for himself final or preponderating, or even independent, power in any one department of the State (*Gleanings of Past Years*, i. 233).

In that interpretation of constitutional sovereignty there was little room for a monarch who wished to assume the position of his own Minister for Foreign Affairs, or, to use the words of Mr. Fox, of "his own unadvised adviser." The sovereign was bound to go through the routine essential to his office (such as the signing of certain papers and taking part in state ceremonies) but might not do more. No one, in that event, would call him to account. Ministers would continue to act without his advice, warnings, or encouragement.

By contrast, the great Conservative ministers, such as Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, felt bound to yield to the wishes of the Crown as far as the constitution allowed, and in all but very great matters Queen Victoria had her way.

Thus, in the mouth of a minister, the epithet "constitutional" might connote complete denial of personal volition, an obligation to take no action and to express no opinion which a minister does not dictate; or it might conversely indicate the right to advise, to encourage, to rebuke, or to warn. But a monarchy remains a monarchy whatever the qualifying epithet and the interpretation placed upon it by successive ministers. The dividing line between constitutional and personal monarchy is more shadowy than is sometimes thought. In legislation the constitutional monarch is powerless for the main part, but in the sphere of executive government there is much open to his unconstrained authority, and he may well share some of his ministers' activities. In practical administration he exercises some of the powers which would appear to be peculiar to personal monarchy, and to be inconsistent with constitutional principles. On the other hand, an autocrat often or at times does the bidding of a minister, or accepts the counsel of a minister, as completely as a constitutional monarch.

III

King Edward VII. fully recognised, and was resolved to abide by, all essential limitations on the exercise of personal power which are inherent in the conception of a constitutional monarchy. He realised that the principle of ministerial responsibility was too well established to admit on his part of any questioning, and the formation and application of policies were,

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as he recognised, functions of ministers and not of the sovereign. Yet the extreme Whig doctrine which interpreted the sovereign as a puppet, all of whose activities are controlled by ministers deriving authority from an elective parliament, was as repugnant to him as to his mother. His wide-flung interests, his extensive knowledge of men and affairs, rendered quiescence in the sphere of government impossible for him, and in the early days of his reign he set himself to find out how best he might help in the business of navigating the ship of state. For this great task he was not inexperienced. For wellnigh forty years before his accession he had followed with eager interest and intelligence the course of European affairs and had made the personal acquaintance of wellnigh every ruler and statesman of influence. It was not, however, generally known that for some fifteen years every important foreign dispatch had been placed at his disposal, and that for some nine years the reports of the proceedings of the cabinet had been regularly submitted to him. Although he had not figured publicly on the political stage, he had moved almost continuously behind the scenes, and the prominent actors had often taken their cue from his lips. The sovereigns of the smaller states—*e g.* Denmark, Greece, Portugal—had constantly appealed to him for guidance, and he had offered them much sound counsel. Towards the end of her life Queen Victoria had overcome much of her reluctance to accept advice from him, and had greatly modified a notion which she once held that he was indiscreet and could not be entrusted with a secret. As her attitude towards him mellowed, she listened with respect to his views on foreign affairs, and at times consulted him before reaching a decision on a difficult issue. In all questions affecting the army she kept him thoroughly informed, and sought his counsel, with the result that he acquired an expert knowledge of the difficult problems of army administration and reform. Occasionally he would tactfully put forward, through the medium of her private secretary, views of his own, and more than once the Queen accepted his suggestions. For his part he was a thorough believer in his mother's breadth of knowledge and soundness of judgement, and it was no lip-service that he paid her memory when he declared, as King, that it was his highest ambition to follow loyally in her footsteps. Possibly at some points he formed an exaggerated view of her positive influence

and was disillusioned by his own experience on the throne as to a constitutional sovereign's real power in moulding or modifying ministerial policy and action.

In these and other affairs, which had occupied his attention unceasingly since his marriage, he used his experience and knowledge to good effect. The large social circle which he continued to cultivate included men whom he regarded as experts on many themes of government, and he occasionally invited their opinion on pending issues. From a strict constitutional point of view, objection to such a practice might be taken, but King Edward always stood by his ministers, whatever their decisions, and deprecated vexatious criticism of their actions. He realised that the strength of a minister's position in regard to any objection from the sovereign as to his course of action lay in his power to resign his office if the sovereign declined to give way to him.

In many important respects King Edward followed closely the example of his mother. Queen Victoria had claimed the right to be consulted in all political matters and the right to express her opinion on ministerial courses, and had pertinaciously exerted herself in these directions. Her successor fell little short of her example, especially where foreign affairs and service matters were concerned. From almost the first moment of his reign the King gave proof in communication with his ministers that within constitutional limits he was bent on asserting his authority in these and other branches of government. He claimed with tenacity the right to consultation on all appointments in the name of the Crown, and showed a surprisingly wide acquaintance with the names and qualifications of possible candidates for all manner of offices. Occasionally he shrewdly pressed suggestions of his own, and not infrequently was able to convince his ministers of the wisdom of his proposals. If a minister announced an appointment in the name of the Crown in the absence of previous consultation with him, he expressed his resentment frankly, requiring a full explanation or apology. At the same time he regarded it as part of his functions to smooth the path of government by the tactful exercise of his personal influence. In no case did he create a deadlock by obstinately preferring his views to those of his ministers. On home questions, many of which he regarded as savouring of the "parish pump," he accepted without demur ministerial advice, but in foreign

affairs he was often inclined to put forward his own views, though he accepted, on constitutional lines, final ministerial conclusions.

But acceptance of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility left to an energetic temperament like that of King Edward large scope for personal activity. He watched with close attention the conduct of his ministers in all public relations and freely expressed disapproval to the Prime Minister whenever it seemed called for—the ties of personal friendship giving no exemption from the royal reproof. When his friend, Lord Londonderry, then Postmaster-General, replied to an anonymous letter of criticism in *The Times* of 2nd January 1902, the King promptly asked the Prime Minister to request him to refrain from making public answers to anonymous censure.

Thus within a few months of the accession of the King every minister knew that he had to deal with a monarch who was determined to do his utmost to see that the ship of state was kept true to compass, and the word quickly went round that whatever kind of monarch Edward the Seventh was likely to be, it was certain that he would not be a *roi fainéant*.

IV

In one other important respect the new King closely emulated his mother's example—he was determined that the royal prerogatives should remain royal. The prerogative of the Crown has been defined as the residue of discretionary or arbitrary authority which at any time is legally left in the hands of the Crown, and as the final security of the subject against the abuse by ministers, politicians, and others of their part therein.[1] At the time of King Edward's accession the great prerogatives of the Crown were theoretically the prerogative of mercy; the dissolution and convocation of Parliament; the dismissal and selection of ministers (though this had been severely challenged in 1880 when Queen Victoria had to relinquish her choice of Lord Hartington as Prime Minister in favour of the more popular Mr. Gladstone)[2]; the declaration of war and peace; the making of treaties; the cession of territory (though Queen

[1] Dicey, *Law of the Constitution*, p. 420.
[2] See Vol. I. pp. 513-15

Victoria was doubtful of the prudence of ceding Heligoland in 1890, and only consented "that any of my possessions should thus be bartered away" on receiving from Lord Salisbury "a positive assurance . . . that the present arrangement constitutes no precedent"[1]); the creation of peers; and the appointment of bishops, colonial governors, and judges. In addition, the sovereign might refuse his or her consent to any Bill; but this prerogative had not been exercised since 1707.

King Edward was fully resolved to maintain as far as possible these royal prerogatives, and in every direction where action was taken in the name of the sovereign, the King made inquiry into the degree of personal responsibility attaching to the monarch. Like Queen Victoria, he resented the conception of the sovereign as "a mere signing machine," and attached, as she had done, great importance to the residue of arbitrary or discretionary power in the possession of the Crown. He was keenly interested in the prerogative of mercy, and examined with care the manner in which it had lately been exercised. His predecessor George IV. had been very active in this regard, but since the opening of Queen Victoria's reign the Home Secretary had dealt on his own authority with questions of reprieve or remission of punishment. It was always an unenviable duty, and subjected the minister to much uninformed public censure. The Home Secretary, Mr. Akers-Douglas (afterwards Viscount Chilston), wisely pointed out to the King (September 26, 1903) that in the interest of the monarchy it was necessary for the Home Secretary to bear the brunt of this public and parliamentary criticism, and that no opening should be given for involving the King's name in these discussions.[2] The usual routine in such cases was for the Home Secretary's decision to be communicated to the King in order that the royal pleasure might be taken, though the minister's decision took effect as soon as it was reached. A royal prerogative had thus become merely a royal interest, and the King, though not claiming the exercise of the prerogative, exercised his interest in it in no uncertain or spasmodic manner.

[1] See Vol. I. p. 663.

[2] By Act of Parliament, 1 Vic. c. 77, the revision of death sentences at the Central Criminal Court was transferred specifically from the sovereign to the Home Secretary, and this regulation was adopted throughout the country, save in the Isle of Man, which did not repeal the statute requiring the royal pleasure to be taken in the case of criminals sentenced to death until 1872.

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There was much public misconception as to the King's power of personal intervention. Many petitions from prisoners under sentence of death or other penalty were forwarded to him direct, instead of through the official channels, and to many of these appeals King Edward gave his full consideration. One such appeal was sent to him not long after his accession. During the course of the Boer War a New Zealand lad was sentenced to death by a military court-martial for sleeping on outpost duty, and though the sentence had subsequently been commuted to penal servitude, the friends of the lad, after appealing to the War Office, eventually wrote to the King, who called for a full report of the case. Two days later the King's private secretary wrote to the petitioners that the King, in the exercise of the royal pleasure, had directed the immediate release of the prisoner.[1]

Another such instance occurred in the case of Mr. Arthur Lynch, an Irishman who fought with the Boers in South Africa, and who, being arrested after the declaration of peace, was on 23rd January 1903 in the King's Bench Division sentenced to death on a charge of high treason, though the sentence was commuted five days later to penal servitude for life. The question of his release was mooted in the cabinet on the occasion of the King's visit to Ireland in the following July, but it was decided to leave the matter alone for the time. In December direct appeals to the King were made both by his friend Sir Thomas Lipton and by Mr. Michael Davitt. A month later (January 20, 1904) the government deemed it politic to release Mr. Lynch, but only on licence. The King was kept informed of these proceedings, and was inclined to a more liberal act of clemency. But when Mr. Lynch wrote to the King asking for his full freedom the King was reluctant to interfere, and the Home Secretary was disinclined to take any further steps. In March, however, with the King's assent, the Home Secretary granted a conditional pardon which set the Irishman free, with some restrictions. Lynch acknowledged the King's intervention in a letter in which he expressed

the hope that the magnanimity of your Majesty's action may find its due counterpart in the warmth of the personal feeling with which the people of Ireland will regard you.

[1] *The Times*, 4th September 1920.

The matter came up again in July 1906, when Lynch sought relief from all disabilities, but the King, as he wrote to Mr. Herbert Gladstone[1] on 21st July, was opposed to any further immediate action as

. . . the acts for which Lynch was convicted—of High Treason, of fighting against his country and of having ordered the men under his command to fire on the English troops—the King looks upon as belonging to the category of almost the worst of crimes. . . . If his offence had been simply a political one the King would at once, and very gladly, have acquiesced in Mr. Gladstone's recommendation, but he regards Mr. Lynch's crime as being on a par with political murders, and, while fully recognising the desirability of conciliating Ireland by any reasonable act of clemency, to endeavour to do so by removing the few restrictions which have been placed on a notorious criminal, who has already been most leniently dealt with, is contrary to the King's conscientious ideas of what is right and just.

At the same time, the King has no objection to state that he would be prepared to reconsider the case should it be again brought before him within a reasonable limit of time.

True to his word, the King raised no objection when on 9th June 1907 the case was again brought before him, and he concurred in the grant of a free pardon.[2]

Many other cases attracted the King's attention. On 24th October 1903 Mr. George Edalji, a young solicitor, was sentenced at the Staffordshire Quarter Sessions to seven years' penal servitude on conviction of wounding a horse. Suspicions of a miscarriage of justice arose shortly after the trial, and on 6th October 1905 Mr. Akers-Douglas reduced the sentence to one of three years' penal servitude. During 1906 a public agitation, led by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Labouchere, resulted in an official Special Commission of Inquiry, which reported that the conviction was unsatisfactory, but that the Home Office would not have been warranted in interfering with it. The Home Secretary advised (May 14, 1907) the grant of a free pardon, though he agreed with the Commissioners that Mr. Edalji had

[1] Mr Herbert Gladstone succeeded Mr. Akers-Douglas as Home Secretary at the end of 1905.

[2] Mr. Lynch had been elected M.P for Galway in 1901, and was Colonel of an Irish Brigade on the Boer side during the South African War. After his release he sat for West Clare as a Nationalist from 1909 to 1922. He joined the British Army in the Great War, becoming a Colonel in 1918.

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to a large extent brought his troubles on himself, and the King promptly expressed his hearty concurrence with the suggestion. That day the King wrote in his own hand:

I have read very carefully all the papers connected with the Edalji case, which I received this evening from Mr. Gladstone, and I have come to the conclusion that the advice the latter has given me on the subject is sound. I entirely agree to the proposed letter which Mr. Gladstone has written to Sir Arthur Wilson,[1] and as an act of Royal clemency I grant Mr. Edalji a Free Pardon.

At times, however, the King's wishes did not coincide with the decisions of the Home Secretary, but he readily admitted that as a constitutional sovereign he was bound to sign any change of sentence which the Home Secretary recommended, though he reserved to himself the full right to criticise the reasons on which his minister's recommendation was based. A curious instance of his independence of judgement was supplied by the case of Horace George Rayner, who had murdered Mr. W. Whiteley, the "Universal Provider," on 24th January 1907. The murderer attempted suicide, but recovered, and was sentenced to death on 22nd March. There was much popular agitation for his reprieve on the grounds of insanity, which led to the penalty being commuted on 1st April by the Home Secretary, who submitted a conditional pardon to the King for signature. The King, after a full inquiry into the circumstances, replied as follows (April 3, 1907):

The King has signed the Pardon which, as a Constitutional Sovereign, he is bound to do, but H.M. would prefer not to express any opinion on the reasons which have led to its adoption. If Rayner was insane, the King cannot see why the verdict of "Temporary Insanity" which you think would have been brought in had Rayner committed suicide should not equally have resulted when he was alive and on his trial. . . . The murder of Mr. Whiteley appeared to be a very cold-blooded one, incident on a failure to obtain blackmail, and this circumstance seems to have been somewhat lost sight of in the agitation which has taken place. The King is entirely averse to any form of punishment which errs on the side of severity, but he feels that as long as capital punishment is laid down as the penalty of murder, the

[1] Member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and Chairman of the Special Commission of Inquiry

commutation of that punishment should be based on legal or moral grounds, and that the tendency nowadays to regard a criminal as a martyr, and to raise an agitation on sentimental grounds in order to put pressure on the Home Secretary, is one which may eventually prove very inconvenient, if concessions are too readily made.

Mr. Gladstone at once sent the King a very full explanation of the reasons which led him to advise the commutation of the sentence, and the King, through Captain Frederick Ponsonby, closed the matter by the following letter (April 17):

The King fully realises that the grave responsibility that rests with you as Home Secretary must be a matter of the greatest difficulty, but in this case His Majesty cannot help feeling that you have been actuated by sentiment. The King entirely concurs with the views expressed by the Lord Chief Justice and considers he puts the case very forcibly from the legal point of view. His Majesty does not attach much importance to the letters and petitions in favour of the prisoner. They are usually the outcome of agitations organised by the halfpenny press, which invariably takes the part of the criminal. The point to be considered is the effect that such a reprieve will have generally, and this the King fears will not be for the best.

As however the matter has already been decided, His Majesty has no wish to re-open the question, but desires me once more to thank you for having so fully replied to the observation he made on the subject.

The King's determination to uphold the royal prerogatives, however, was by no means as great or as persistent as the determination of his ministers, especially his Conservative ministers, to uphold the all-embracing power of Parliament. During the course of his reign most of the great prerogatives were challenged by the then Prime Minister, and in each case the Crown gave way and in practical effect surrendered the prerogative. By some curious irony it was the Conservative party, the traditional "Church and King" party, which, during King Edward's short reign, made the most resounding attacks on what was left of the royal prerogatives. Even the two great prerogatives of the dissolution of Parliament and of the cession of territory were challenged by Mr. Balfour in 1904–5. When Parliament was dissolved in 1905 at the request of the Prime Minister, the King's displeasure was by no means minimised by Mr. Balfour's statement that the House of Commons could insist upon a

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dissolution and that the cabinet had dictated it The Prime Minister also held that ministers might be selected or dismissed without reference to the Crown. More than this, treaties were made and territory was ceded by Act of Parliament more than once during the reign, Mr. Balfour arguing, on the occasion of the cession of territory involved by the Anglo-French agreement of 1904, that the assent of Parliament was necessary.[1] In both cases Mr. Balfour won his point. Later on a few peers were created at the request of the Prime Minister, and in spite of the King's protests "Crown" appointments became the patronage of the Prime Minister. However much the King disliked a parliamentary bill, it is doubtful whether he would ever have dreamt of exercising the dormant royal veto.

Only one great prerogative was not tested—the prerogative of the declaration of war—though the declaration of peace in South Africa in 1902 was again the result of the deliberation of the cabinet. Towards the end of King Edward's reign the controversial struggle between the Lords and the Commons resulted in the bringing into public discussion the question of the royal creation of peers, but the King's untimely death occurred before he was called upon to exercise extensively one of the last of the great prerogatives at the bidding of a minister.

[1] Early in 1909, when the question of the evacuation of part of Somaliland was mooted, the King's attention was at once aroused, and he requested Lord Crewe to give him "further information on the subject, as Asquith makes no reference to the reasons which have induced the Cabinet to come to this decision. His Majesty only hopes that the tribes with whom we have entered into engagements will not be left to the mercy of the Mullah or any such Potentate, without real and practical safeguards" To this inquiry Lord Crewe made elaborate reply (March 16) that the cost of conquering Somaliland was prohibitive, that the natives were not civilisable, and that it was "a worthless possession." But he promised to keep the King fully informed as to future decisions. On 10th March Mr. Asquith informed the King that a supplementary vote in the House of Commons had approved the withdrawal of British troops in Somaliland to the coast. Provision had been made with the Mullah for the proper treatment of natives with whom we had been friendly. Like Queen Victoria, the King did not like "giving up what one has," but finally assented to the withdrawal.

A year later, 9th March 1910, Mr. Asquith wrote to the King a cabinet letter in which he stated that the withdrawal of troops to the coast could now safely be carried out, and on 31st March Lord Crewe reported that the retirement from the interior had been successfully completed.

It was the only occasion during the reign when the King was called upon to assent to the relinquishment without compensation of part of the Empire, and that duty went sorely against the grain

V

In spite of Queen Victoria's jealous guardianship of the royal prerogatives, Her Majesty had delegated some of her royal powers to others, and these powers King Edward sought to resume as soon as opportunity offered.

The Duke of Cambridge had long held from the Queen the office of Ranger of the Royal Parks—St. James's Park, Green Park, Hyde Park, and Richmond Park. On the Duke's death, on 17th March 1904, the King took into his own hands the "duties, rights, and powers" of that office, and while he did not disturb Rear-Admiral Sir Adolphus FitzGeorge and Lieut.-General R. Bateson in their respective duties as "Deputy Ranger of Richmond Park" and "Superintendent, or Deputy under the Ranger, of St. James's, Green, and Hyde Parks," he warned these officials that they could "give no orders without my permission." His intention was to supervise personally the administration of the Parks through the medium of the Office of Works, a department whose duties specially interested him. The First Commissioner of Works had already shared some control of the Parks with the Ranger, but the limits of their respective authority were not well determined and some conflict had resulted. The new arrangement, which conferred supreme power over the Parks on the King, established the First Commissioner as his effective partner.[1]

Another instance illustrates the King's resolve personally to fulfil every function of the Crown. When the President of the Council, his friend the Duke of Devonshire, pointed out to him, on the eve of his departure for several weeks' sojourn on the Continent, that it was customary to prepare a draft order empowering another member of the royal family to hold a Council in an emergency in the sovereign's absence, the King demurred. He felt, he wrote (August 7, 1901), a great reluctance to depute

[1] For constitutional reasons it became necessary to substitute, on the Parks' notice-boards announcing regulations to the public, the words "By Order" for the old formula "By Order of the Ranger," otherwise the King, who had now assumed the office of Ranger, would personally be liable for his action and open to criticism by the House of Commons or the press. It was a constitutional principle to hold a minister, and not the sovereign, directly responsible for all royal actions. It was therefore essential that the First Commissioner of Works should bear direct responsibility for whatever action the sovereign took in regard to the Parks.

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anyone to hold a Council for him during his absence from England, but added that

> should it therefore be necessary to summon a meeting of the Council while he is away, he will be prepared to return in order to preside at it.[1]

These were both illustrations of the King's firm intention of reasserting those royal functions which Queen Victoria had through physical weakness allowed to slip through her fingers. At all costs he would not be a *roi fainéant* under the control of a *maire du Palais*. To the maximum of his ability he would pull his weight in the affairs of state, even though ministers might at times demur.

Through old age or oriental aloofness, as we have seen, Queen Victoria had allowed the custom of opening Parliament to fall into desuetude. Here again the King resumed a royal function, and on the 14th of February 1901 opened his first Parliament, and thenceforward, either in January or February of each year, repeated the ceremony in full state. He insisted that a draft of the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament should be submitted to him in time for his criticism, and he usually made suggestions or corrections, which the Prime Minister carefully considered, even though he might not always adopt them.

It had been common practice on the part of the Prime Minister's secretary to communicate to the press on the day before the opening of the parliamentary session the general lines which the sovereign's speech would follow. Two years later Mr. J. S. Sandars, Mr. Balfour's secretary, asked for the King's opinion. But to such preliminary " inspiration " the King was stoutly opposed.

> " I am dead against any ' inspiration ' being sent to the newspapers," he wrote in his own hand on 14th February 1903. " It is done in no country, probably not even in America. The

[1] Subsequently, however, in March 1903, the King deferred to the representations of his ministers and approved of Letters Patent being prepared authorising the Prince of Wales to hold Councils, and to pass anything which the King might approve The Patent was to be sealed, but was not to be issued unless occasion should arise—a qualification which did not enable anything to be done under the Patent except with the King's written consent given *pro hac vice*. In 1906 the King assented to a triumvirate of the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister, and the Lord President of the Council (the Prince of Wales also being away from England) being invested with royal authority.

King's speech is drawn up by his ministers, but if the Press gets hold of it before it is made at the opening of Parliament from the Throne it becomes a perfect farce. Sandars belongs evidently to a new regime. One has heard of the 'New Woman,' but he is the 'New Man.'"

The reports of cabinet meetings which it was the practice of the Prime Minister to forward in his own hand to the sovereign immediately after each session were studied closely by the King, and he frankly rebuked the writer for any undue brevity. He frequently complained of the omission of material points and inquired the cause. He desired that, as of old, the length should run to four sides of a quarto sheet. He modified the old practice requiring from the leader of the House of Commons a report each night of the proceedings, allowing him to devolve the duty on the Home Secretary, and this change was observed throughout the reign. Nor did the King insist, as Queen Victoria had done, on the dispatch of the report the same evening.[1] But Mr. Balfour still wrote the cabinet notes to the King in his own hand, and the King appreciated their breezy argumentativeness, which somewhat resembled Lord Palmerston's letters to Queen Victoria. On 6th November 1903, for instance, the cabinet meeting had an unusual amount of business to transact—the Expedition to Tibet, the Sultan's obduracy in Balkan affairs, financial stringency at home, the slow progress of the negotiations with France in regard to Egypt and Newfoundland, and Lord Milner's counsel as to the supply of Chinese labour to the South African goldfields, were the topics under consideration. On Balfour's report the next day the King added the comment:

The meeting of the cabinet must have been unusually interesting and important yesterday. The way the account of the proceedings is given is truly "Balfourian."

VI

Thus from the first days of his reign King Edward showed that he meant to take an active part in public affairs. Well indeed might he object to becoming a mere "signing automaton";

[1] The formality was a survival of days when newspapers failed to report parliamentary proceedings, and King Edward's successor allowed it to lapse on the reasonable ground that the Home Secretary's notes were superseded by the daily press reports.

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for the mere manual labour involved in the appending of his signature to official documents was heavy. Not only were there the current state documents to sign but also thousands of army commissions It had been Queen Victoria's habit to sign these with her own hand. Up to 1898 she had signed sixty commissions every week, but the South African war had led to an immense increase in the number of new commissions, and the Queen, whose physical strength was failing, had fallen into large arrears with the work. Five thousand two hundred of these commissions now awaited the royal signature. The King at once applied himself to the labour, but it was difficult to make up lost ground. In April 1901 he undertook to sign a hundred commissions every day "till they are finished." The task, however, proved too great for his resolution, and within a short space of time he approved the provision of a stamp which he should keep himself and should be used only under his direct authority. To this stamping he applied himself assiduously, and during the seven weeks ending on 30th May he signed no fewer than 4000 commissions in this way. By June the arrears were caught up, and it was estimated that two hundred signatures weekly would be all that would be required thereafter.

Added to this work there was the necessity of dealing with current correspondence. To the Kaiser, the Tsar, and other rulers of friendly states, ambassadors, relatives, and intimate personal friends, he invariably wrote letters in his own hand. In the case of heads of foreign states he occasionally sent instructions to the British Ambassadors at their courts to give them messages, respecting, as always, the traditional methods of diplomatic intercourse.

Letters from the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Secretary, and the Secretary for War, which were always in their own handwriting, were variously dealt with when they seemed to the King to require express approval or critical comment. If the contents were uncontentious or in accordance with the King's views, they were just initialled "Appd. E.R." or "Seen, E.R.", but in matters of importance touching foreign or military affairs he would often reply in his own autograph, especially in the early years of his reign. But the more common practice, which grew after the first few years, was for him to write upon the minister's communication a statement of his own view of the question at

issue. Lord Knollys, the King's secretary, then redrafted the note in epistolary form, signing with his own name the letter, which as a rule literally embodied the King's own words. When the King strongly dissented from action which the minister was taking, Lord Knollys occasionally softened the royal phraseology without, however, changing its tenor or general temper. Much correspondence inevitably passed between the King and his ministers, but it was of modest dimensions compared with that in which his mother had invariably indulged. Living, as he did, for the most part in London, it was easy to invite a few minutes' conversation in place of voluminous letter-writing. Nor did the King disdain the use of modern improvements in methods of communication, and the telephone was readily requisitioned in order to save time and labour. By all these means King Edward from the outset of his reign came into far closer touch with current affairs than any previous monarch.

In addition to this direct correspondence there was also, later in the reign, a vast amount of correspondence between the King's private secretary, Lord Knollys, and the Prime Minister's private secretary, Mr. J. S. Sandars, who was in very confidential relations with his chief, Mr. Balfour, occasionally even representing the Prime Minister's views in interviews with the King. Lord Knollys's tact invariably made him an excellent intermediary, but he admitted frankly to the King that a few words from himself would have more effect than anything he might say in the King's behalf. Writing to the King on 18th April 1906 he said:

> I always bear in mind what Lord Salisbury used to say when Sir Henry Ponsonby or Sir A. Bigge came to see him from Queen Victoria, "I wonder how much of this is from the Queen and how much from Ponsonby or Bigge," as the case might be!

When the King was abroad correspondence followed him in great masses. No matter how great the volume, he desired everything to be dealt with promptly, and was often impatient at any delay in the dispatch of his replies. The telegraph was in constant use, and the King usually wrote in his own hand the message to be transmitted in cypher. In cases of grave moment he would write a full autograph note to Lord Knollys, who always remained in England, directing the precise lines of a

reply. Matters of smaller consequence would be dealt with by Sir Arthur Davidson or Captain (afterwards Colonel Sir) Frederick Ponsonby, the King's assistant private secretaries, after receiving verbal instructions.

The King naturally wished to be in the full confidence of his ministers, and to be kept thoroughly informed of all their plans. He was willing to make allowance for accidental failures of communication, but the omission invariably irritated him. He was extremely annoyed when ministers failed to submit to him intended appointments of high officials in their departments before any public announcement. When Mr. George Wyndham, Secretary for Ireland, made Sir Antony MacDonnell his Under-Secretary (October 31, 1902) and did not inform his sovereign of the fact, the King administered a stern rebuke, and on the minister's excuse of pressure of work the King commented: "The excuses of the ministers are often as 'gauche' as their omissions"

When in March 1903 he learned from Mr. Balfour's speech in the House of Commons for the first time of the government's resolve to form a new naval base on the Firth of Forth, he readily accepted the explanation that Lord Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty, within whose province the matter lay, had omitted to furnish the King with the intelligence owing to absence on official duty at Portland. Even the Prime Minister was not above royal reproof. On the 4th March 1903 Mr. Balfour, as the principal guest at a dinner of Nonconformist Unionists, made a very important speech in which he surveyed the position of the two great parties in the state, and condemned forcibly Lord Rosebery's endeavour to form a middle party, concluding with a review of the Imperial situation. The King was annoyed at not being informed of the Prime Minister's intention, and, after reading his speech in the newspaper next day, wrote to Mr. Balfour (March 7):

> The King takes such a deep interest in the welfare of his country and especially in all matters connected with its defence, that he was naturally much surprised, and he might even say pained, to have received no information on the subject.

The King did not exaggerate his "deep interest in the welfare of the country, and especially in all matters connected with its

defence," and he would regularly spend, after the evening's relaxation was over, an hour or two looking over state papers. Lord Redesdale gives us a description of one of his many evening meetings with the King.

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"One night," he relates, "I was dining at the Club, after King Edward had come to the throne but before he had moved from Marlborough House into Buckingham Palace. He knew that I was in London for two or three days alone, so he sent over to ask whether I was at the Club, and, if so, to bid me go across to him. I found him in his private sitting-room all alone, and we sat smoking and talking over old times for a couple of hours. Towards midnight he got up and said, 'Now I must bid you good-night, for I must set to work,' pointing to a huge pile of familiar red boxes. 'Surely,' I said, 'your Majesty is not going to tackle all that work to-night!' His answer was, 'Yes, I must! Besides, it is all so interesting,' and then he gave me one of his happy smiles and I left him. 'So interesting!' that was the frame of mind in which he faced his work—he, the man who we are asked to believe could not be brought to attend to business!"[1]

VII

Whatever question came to the King's knowledge, and whatever branch of government it touched, he was ready with surprising celerity to offer (usually on the margin or a vacant space at the end of a report or letter) an expression of independent judgement. Some of the topics which he treated with this promptitude may seem remote from his near interests, but in fact there was scarcely an item in the business of administration which fell outside his range of shrewd comment. For example, as the nominal head of the Church of England he was anxious to exercise all authority appertaining to him as "Defender of the Faith." Many ecclesiastical appointments were in the gift of the Crown, and to these he paid special attention. But he was always ready with suggestions for filling vacant ecclesiastical and even academic appointments.

Immediately on his accession a vacancy in a high ecclesiastical office, the Bishopric of London, occupied his attention. Dr. Mandell Creighton, the brilliant Bishop of London, had died a

[1] Redesdale, *King Edward VII*. p. 19.

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week before (January 14) and the filling of the vacant Metropolitan See was an urgent matter. The King had already given the choice careful personal consideration, and on 20th January 1901 he suggested that the Bishop of Rochester (Dr. F. S. Talbot) should be appointed. Lord Salisbury, however, suggested the Bishop of Newcastle (Dr. Edgar Jacob), and failing him the Bishop of Winchester. The King replied on 7th February:

I only wish that the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Randall Davidson) would accept the Bishopric of London, but he has repeatedly told me that he could not undertake it on account of his health, and other reasons. Still it might be offered to him as you suggest, and failing him to be offered to the Bishop of Rochester. Should the latter decline I am inclined to believe that the Bishop of Stepney (Dr. Winnington Ingram) would be a better selection than the Bishop of Newcastle.

In the event the King's last nominee, Dr. Winnington Ingram, was appointed

When, two months later, the Deanery of Peterborough fell vacant, the modest value of which the King regretted, he suggested that the Prime Minister should appoint either his son, Edward, or his brother-in-law, Canon Alderson. But Lord Salisbury replied (May 3, 1901): "I am very grateful to His Majesty for his thoughtfulness, but my relation-promoting power is for the moment exhausted and requires rest." The King thought that Lord Salisbury's conscience might at least have approved the appointment of his brother-in-law to a vacant Deanery.

Again, in October 1902, the Bishop of Winchester suggested that Colonial Bishops should be eligible for appointment as Canons, and that King's chaplains should not, as heretofore, vacate their positions on accepting preferment as Suffragan Bishops or Deans Straightway the King appended this comment:

Theoretically there is some truth in the Bishop's argument, but practically it would not be fair on other church clergy who have only a living and no other preferment. Therefore I feel that a Bishop Suffragan or a Dean should cease to be my Chaplain simply to give another clergyman a chance of being one. The Bishop evidently advocates the system of pluralists, which I do not. Making the Colonial Bishops Canons is, I think, a mistake,

unless they consent to drop the name and the dress, as it is incongruous that a man who still calls himself a Bishop should be under a Dean. Let the Bishop of Winchester know my views, as he has started the whole thing.

The Bishop of Winchester was duly informed of the King's views, and the two suggestions were dropped. But towards the end of his reign the King's interest in the appointment of Bishops, one of the royal prerogatives, waned considerably, and from 1906 onwards the selection of the higher officials of the Church of England was in the hands of a non-Anglican Prime Minister.

In the early years of the reign, however, no matter what appointment was made in the name of the Crown, the King showed a lively personal interest, and often rejected the choice of the Prime Minister. His comments on ministers' suggestions of persons to fill these posts usually illustrate his shrewdness and detachment of mind. The suggestion was made in the House of Commons that in regard to one office, that of the Poet Laureate, the holder might be held to have retired for good on the demise of a wearer of the Crown, in which case the post might well be abolished. Lord Salisbury regarded the matter as entirely for the King's decision. The King, who had no great opinion of the then Poet Laureate, Mr. Austin, wrote on the point (March 26, 1901):

I always thought that Mr. Austin's appointment was not a good one, but as long as he gets *no* pay it would, I think, be best to renew the appointment in his favour. . . . The appointment was made by the Prime Minister.

A few months later the King sent Lord Salisbury some verses by Mr. Austin, and pointedly called his attention to the "trash which the Poet Laureate writes."

Ten months later (in September 1902), the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, Lord Acton, died. The new Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, proposed as Lord Acton's successor Admiral Mahan, the American writer on naval history. The King promptly pointed out that the appointment of a foreigner would prove unpopular, and suggested Mr. John Morley, M.P., who, although not a historian, was a biographer of distinction. When the Prime Minister pointed out that Mr. Morley had few historical qualifications and had become too completely a House of Commons man to be well qualified for a professorship, and that little

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objection could be made to Admiral Mahan as a "foreigner" since America often recruited her professors from England, and that in this particular case Mahan had proved himself an authoritative historian of the British Empire and navy, the King withdrew Morley's name, while still objecting to Mahan's, but declared himself ready to appoint Mr. Lecky [1] or any other British subject of the requisite competence. In the event the name of Professor Bury, who was Professor of Modern History in Dublin University, was suggested, and his appointment was sanctioned by the King on 21st January 1903. In all the King's expressions of opinion on these and similar subjects there is a blunt decisiveness which attracts by contrast with the politely worded and courtly missives of ministers, and which is indicative of the straightforward directness that was one of the most notable traits in his character.

While King Edward was thus anxious to assert all the powers and privileges attaching to his great position in the state, he was equally desirous to see every honour accorded to Queen Alexandra. Nothing angered him more than any real or supposed neglect of proper respect for his Consort; even the intimate members of his old entourage received more than one warning, that if the Prince of Wales was now the King, and meant to be the King, the former Princess of Wales was also now the Queen, and was to be treated with all regal dignity. Within a month of his accession (February 12, 1901) he conferred upon her the unusual honour of Lady of the Order of the Garter. When Garter King, Sir Albert Woods, raised objections that the statutes of the Order and Precedents seemed to prohibit him from placing the Queen's banner in St George's Chapel, the King promptly ordered the banner to be put up.[2]

[1] The Rt. Hon. W E. H. Lecky, P.C., O M., M P. for Dublin University, 1896–1903.

[2] Although the admission of a lady to the Order was most unusual, the records of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries leave no doubt that ladies were regularly received into it. The Queens Consort, the wives and daughters of Knights, and some other women of exalted positions, were designated "Dames de la Fraternité de St. George," and entries of the deliveries of robes and garters to them are found at intervals in the wardrobe accounts from 1376–1495, the first being Isobel, Countess of Bedford, the daughter of Edward III., and the last being Margaret and Elizabeth, daughters of Henry VII. The effigies of Margaret Byron, wife of Sir Robert Harcourt, K.G., at Stanton Harcourt, and of Alice Chaucer, wife of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, K.G., at Ewelme, which date from the reigns of Henry VII. and Edward IV., have garters on their left arms.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW COURT

I

One of the most fascinating tasks for the new King was the composition of the new royal household. Within a week of his accession he had let it be known that there would be no sudden changes, and that all members of the royal household were to retain their places and salaries for six months, but it was inevitable that there should be some displacements in order to make room for those who had given the King, while Prince of Wales, highly efficient and loyal assistance in the management of his diverse interests.

With characteristic fidelity to those who had long served him, King Edward filled the responsible posts in his new household with trusted associates of old standing, who had already scored record years of service. Sir Francis Knollys, who had served him as Private Secretary since 1870, and Sir Dighton Probyn, who had been Comptroller and Treasurer for a quarter of a century, became respectively his Private Secretary and Keeper of the Privy Purse. Sir Francis Knollys had developed during his prolonged service a marvellous tact, and had acquired a unique knowledge of men and matters, preserving in his attitude to his master throughout the long period the ideal mean between self-assertion and self-suppression. His indefatigable industry and his unquestioned devotion made him an invaluable and indispensable officer, and for the moment he was acknowledged to be "the most powerful man in England." It was widely felt that the King could not have been in better hands. In Sir Dighton Probyn the same characteristics were combined

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with a faculty for shrewd finance. As early as 1872 the Prince had recognised his promise as an administrator, in addition to his fine military aptitudes. Since then Sir Dighton had acquired command of the work of land-agent and horticulturist, and had ably seconded the King's efforts in developing the Sandringham estate. Both Knollys and Probyn were a few years the King's seniors, and were unusually long-lived.[1]

Colonel (afterwards Sir) Arthur Davidson and Captain (now Colonel Sir) Frederick Ponsonby, who both had a distinguished military record, now became Assistant Private Secretaries and Equerries-in-Ordinary to the King, and by their industry, tact, and ability did much to ease the burden that rested upon the shoulders of Sir Francis Knollys.

The responsible position of Master of the King's Household was now filled by Lord Farquhar, an old associate of the King's and a keen financier, who at once made himself responsible for the reorganisation of the royal establishments, in which many extravagances and anachronisms survived from the long reign of Queen Victoria. He was well supported by his deputy and successor, Lieutenant-Colonel (afterwards Sir) Charles Frederick, whose delicate task of supervising the royal kitchens and cellars was fulfilled with such personal amiability that every guest appreciated it. Major-General Sir Arthur Ellis, an accomplished linguist, who had been an equerry since 1867 and had invariably accompanied the King when Prince of Wales on his travels abroad, was appointed Comptroller in the Lord Chamberlain's department, and his friend Major-General Sir Stanley Clarke, another equerry of long service, became Clerk-Marshal and Chief Equerry. Colonel Sir Nigel Kingscote, who had been Receiver-General of the Duchy of Cornwall since 1888, was appointed Paymaster to the King's Household and an extra equerry, and Sir Maurice Holzmann, who had been Secretary and Keeper of the Records of the Duchy of Cornwall and Clerk of the Council to the Prince of Wales since 1886, now became an extra groom-in-

[1] Both died near the same date in 1924, more than fourteen years after their master had passed away. Sir Dighton Probyn, born on 21st January 1833, died at Sandringham on 20th June 1924. After King Edward's death he became Comptroller of Queen Alexandra's household, and held that post until the end. Lord Knollys, born on 16th July 1837, died on 15th August 1924. He was for three years, 1910–13, Private Secretary to King Edward's son and successor, King George V.

waiting. Lord Suffield, a very old friend who had accompanied the King to India in 1875–76, was appointed at the King's express wish "Permanent Lord-in-Waiting, like Bridport to the late Queen." All had long been on terms of friendship with the King, and with the exception of the assistant private secretaries, who were considerably the King's juniors, were of the King's own generation. In addition to these there were numbers of equerries and grooms-in-waiting, all amiable and chivalrous gentlemen, devoted to the King, endowed with discretion and diplomatic cleverness, polished, urbane, and for the most part excellent sportsmen.[1] In all he placed the fullest confidence and trust—a confidence that was never betrayed and a trust that was never abused. The King, for his part, was equally loyal, and retained the members of his household until age or ill-health incapacitated them.

These officers of the King's household, a charming circle of cavaliers, together with such men as General Kelly-Kenny, Admiral Sir John Fisher, the Hon. Charles Hardinge (afterwards Lord Hardinge of Penshurst), became the nucleus of the new court. To these were added from time to time the leaders in various branches of national activity, together with the flower of the peerage and the highest and the most charming ladies of the land.

The entrée to the court did not depend entirely upon birth or rank, for King Edward was quick to recognise a congenial spirit, and those who met with his approval rapidly found their way to the inner circle of the most brilliant coterie England had known for centuries. It will be noted that the majority of the officers of the King's household were distinguished soldiers who had already seen military service abroad, and had imbibed the traditions of that service. Yet the court could not be regarded as military in tone, since King Edward himself, although loving uniform, ceremonial, and display, always appeared for

[1] Among the equerries were Colonel the Hon. Henry Legge, Captain the Hon. Seymour Fortescue, Major George Holford, who was a keen orchid grower (*d.* September 11, 1926), and the Hon. "Johnny" Ward. Among the extra equerries were Major-General J. C. Russell, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir F. I. Edwards, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur J. Bigge (afterwards Lord Stamfordham), Admiral Sir H. F. Stephenson, Major the Hon. A. H. F. Greville, Colonel Count Gleichen, Lord Marcus Beresford, Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Sir W. H. P. Carrington, Lieutenant-Colonel A. B. Haig, and Rear-Admiral Hon. Sir H. Lambton.

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the greater part of the day in the dress of a private English gentleman.

But among the King's entourage were one or two new-comers. One such was Lord Esher, who had sat in Parliament as Liberal M.P. for Penryn and Falmouth from 1880 to 1885 and had made a study of army organisation. In 1895 Lord Esher became Secretary to the Office of Works, and in this capacity he came into direct personal relations with the King when the royal palaces were in process of reorganisation in 1901, and later when the Coronation ceremonial came under discussion. Lord Esher's cleverness, versatile interests, and studious habits strongly recommended him to the King and gave him a position of much influence at Buckingham Palace. From the early days of the reign he offered, either through Lord Knollys or directly to the King, much advice on current issues, especially on military and constitutional matters.

The King now appointed him Deputy-Constable and Lieutenant-Governor of Windsor Castle. In this capacity he had control of the royal archives, with which he made himself well acquainted. From the material at his disposal in Queen Victoria's correspondence with her ministers he sought to reduce to systematic rule the rights of the sovereign in supervising the work of the ministers. The precedents lacked consistency at many points, but from the evidence Lord Esher succeeded in establishing the principle that there were few decisions of ministers which, according to the Victorian tradition, could be justly announced to the public before they had been privately communicated to the King for his approval. The King, who thoroughly appreciated Lord Esher's endeavour to give the Crown its due weight in the constitution, encouraged him to write frequently on affairs of state, and adopted many of his suggestions in matters of domestic administration and army reorganisation. All that Lord Esher heard in society or in foreign travel he promptly reported to Lord Knollys for the King's ear. His influence exposed him to some criticism, and not a little jealousy, in the royal household; but he had the ear of the King.[1]

[1] Leaving the Office of Works in July 1902 he accepted the King's nomination to the South African War Inquiry Commission. While the Commission was taking evidence Esher sent to the King daily reports of the proceedings, with incisive comments of his own. In 1904 he became chairman of the small Committee on War Office Reconstitution, and in 1905 a permanent member of

Among the more intimate friends of the King and members of the inner circle of the court were several foreigners. One of the most important of these was the Portuguese Marquis de Soveral, who had been successively since 1885 First Secretary of the Portuguese Legation and Portuguese Minister in London (save during the years of 1895–97, when he returned to Lisbon as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs). Tall and well built, with blue-black hair and a fierce moustache, with his invariable monocle, white buttonhole, and white gloves, he went everywhere and was everywhere *persona gratissima.* He had great social and diplomatic gifts. More important still, he had few equals as a raconteur. His unique position as "the most popular man in London" had been gained by a singular charm of manner and a tact equal to that of the King himself. "Why did you wait for an invitation?" said the King on one occasion when the name of the Marquis had been omitted by mistake from the list of week-end guests at Sandringham; "why didn't you come without?" Soveral, who had just contrived to arrive in time for dinner in response to an urgent telegram, did not make the obvious reply that one could not intrude upon a King unasked. He staggered his fellow-guests by remarking in his best manner, "Well, Sir, I had got as far as my door when your command arrived." Portuguese through and through, cosmopolitan by training, diplomatic by choice and temperament, a courtier and a man withal, a warm friend without enemies, genial, merry, and loquacious, Soveral filled a place that no foreigner has held in England within living memory, and well earned the epithet of "Soveral überall." Of King Edward he was a trusted companion in England and abroad, and to Soveral it was due in large measure that King Edward's first state visit after his accession was paid to the court of Lisbon. His loyalty and discretion were beyond reproach, as was the goodness of heart that saved him, as the same quality often saved King Edward, from errors into which statesmen reputedly abler frequently fell. After the Portuguese revolution of 1908 and the King's death in 1910,

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the Committee of Imperial Defence. Throughout the reign he discussed freely with the King the successive proposals of ministers of war for army reform. From 1909 to 1913 he was chairman of the Territorial Force Association of the County of London. Lord Esher was selected by King Edward VII. as one of the editors of the *Letters of Queen Victoria,* which appeared in 1907.

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Soveral preferred impoverishment and the comparative obscurity it entailed rather than to enrich himself by writing his memoirs. To him confidences were sacred—even when those from whom he had received them had passed away. A gallant gentleman and a grand seigneur, he proved more than worthy of the great trust the King reposed in him.

But perhaps a greater friend, if not the King's greatest friend, was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Ernest Cassel, a scrupulous financier, eleven years the King's junior, with an amazing record behind him. The son of a Cologne banker, he had commenced his astounding financial career as an apprentice to the firm of Elzbachers in Cologne. Already in those early days he showed some of that marvellous tenacity of purpose which was the dominant characteristic of the whole man. He was ambitious, and wanted to get to England. Sooner than was to be expected his opportunity came. Mr. Louis Bischoffsheim was looking out for a confidential clerk. Hundreds had sent in their application—full of the usual verbosity and self-praise. Bischoffsheim was in despair. All of a sudden, after opening yet another letter he handed it over to his secretary saying, "That's our man." The letter read:

> Dear Sir—I apply for the position in your office and refer you to my former chiefs, Messrs. Elzbacher, Cologne.—Yours sincerely, Ernest Cassel.

The letter breathed a rare self-confidence. The reference was quickly obtained, and as it was favourable Cassel was engaged. He at once showed what he was made of. Quick in perception, clear in judgement, strong in will, almost unerring, he soon mastered the intricacies of Bischoffsheim's enterprises, and after two years he was drawing an income of £5000. The Bischoffsheims in those days were engaged in railway-building, and it was a peculiarity of this business that lawsuits were often unavoidable. It was in such cases that Cassel's genius came most prominently to the front. From the day he took over the management of that branch of the house not a single case more was settled in court. Up to the critical moment he fought hard and relentlessly with his adversaries and showed himself unbending, even masterful. Even lawyers feared him. But always, just as a break seemed inevitable, he

compromised with the other party on the strength of some crucial point he had in his favour, and with results that were the delight of his chief.

By now, on account of his share in some important and intricate work (the exposure of "Honduras Loan Swindle") which he carried out with success, he became known to a few leading men in the City, and began to establish himself in business. In the 'eighties he turned his attention to South America, where he acquired large interests, and was of great use to the Bank of England in overcoming difficulties when in 1890 the finances of the Argentine collapsed. By this time Cassel was regarded by the inner cabinet of the City as a cool and sagacious adviser in finance. There followed in quick succession large transactions in Mexico, in Sweden, in Egypt, and lastly in the United States, which laid the corner-stone of his immense wealth. In Egypt he built up something which has proved to be to the Empire's greatest credit, for he opened up the country, helped to bring peace and a good understanding between the races, and of course made an enormous amount of money by tapping the resources of a neglected but fertile country.

It was not only Mr. Bischoffsheim who appreciated what Cassel achieved: Baron Maurice de Hirsch, Bischoffsheim's brother-in-law, also admired Cassel's methods, and the admiration of Baron Hirsch was of more consequence than that of Bischoffsheim, since he was an intimate friend of King Edward, who was then Prince of Wales.[1] On Hirsch's death in 1896 Cassel became his executor. It was now that Cassel came to London and met the Prince, and from that day onwards the Prince and Cassel were friends for life.

It was not often that Cassel showed his feelings to others. He was reserved by nature and cool, but a veritable prince of charity. London institutions received more than a million pounds from his bounty, cancer research, hospitals, and education coming in for his especial benevolence. He was a straightforward and masterful personality, neither mean nor petty, and loved entertaining in a princely fashion. He lived much at Moulton Paddocks, where the King used to visit him. He was, however, an unlucky racehorse owner and breeder. His colours were

[1] See Vol. I. pp. 575–6.

registered in 1895, but he was not elected to the Jockey Club till 1908.

The King's first public proof of his friendship for this financier was his attendance at the wedding of Cassel's only daughter, Maud, to Mr. (afterwards Colonel the Rt. Hon.) Wilfrid Ashley on 4th January 1901. Later he became godfather to their first daughter—Edwina (now Lady Louis Mountbatten). The friendship had further been cemented by the sagacious financial advice which Cassel was enabled to give the King. He practically controlled the King's investments, and saw to it that they were not mismanaged. In 1902 the King testified to his high regard for Cassel by creating him a Privy Councillor,[1] and conferring on him the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and in 1906 and 1909 further proofs of his appreciation followed with the Grand Cross of the Victorian Order and the Bath

One of the outstanding features of the King's private life was his friendship with Soveral and Cassel and the regard they had for him—a regard that gives the lie to the saying that "Kings have no friends." Yet how dissimilar were the two—Soveral polished, suave, urbane, and diplomatic, "the most popular man in London"; Cassel blunt, strict, and, like Esher, cordially disliked in some quarters. Yet the two, although so temperamentally opposite, had a respect for one another—a respect that gave Soveral an opportunity for a brilliant *bon mot.* In January 1902 the King went to the St James's Theatre to see a farce by Oscar Wilde which greatly amused him A few days later he asked Soveral whether he had seen *The Importance of being Earnest.* "No, Sir," answered Soveral, "but I have seen the importance of being Ernest Cassel." [2]

For a time, too, another gentleman of German descent, Sir Felix Semon, a friend of Sir Ernest Cassel, was warmly welcomed at the court. Semon was a nose and throat specialist who had first been introduced to the King in 1888, and had soon received invitations to garden parties at Marlborough House. From 1896

[1] In 1915 his Privy Councillorship was disputed, as Cassel was born out of British dominions and was not of British parentage, hence debarred by Act of Settlement. Judgement was given for Cassel, after much erudition had been shown on both sides, on the grounds that the disqualification had been repealed by subsequent legislation.

[2] Sir Algernon West's Diaries.

onwards Semon was the King's confidential physician, and he was now appointed Physician Extraordinary to the King—the first time a laryngologist had been thus honoured. Although proud of his German nationality, and of his services in the war of 1870–71, he decided to become a naturalised British subject, a step which greatly pleased the King, who constantly invited him to Windsor, Sandringham, and Balmoral, where he was in much demand as a witty raconteur, an expert bridge player, and a good shot—three qualifications that counted very highly with the King.

Another physician, Sir Francis Laking, who had established his position through his talent and his attractive manner, was also *persona grata* at the court, and it was on these two and Sir Frederick Treves that the King placed his entire reliance where his health was concerned.

The King's inner circle of friends also included three of the Sassoon brothers, a Jewish family of mixed descent. The eldest brother, Albert, was created a baronet in 1890, and the second, Sir Edward Albert Sassoon, who had married Aline, the daughter of Baron Gustave de Rothschild, in 1887,[1] succeeded to his brother's title in 1896. Their half-brothers were Sassoon Sassoon (1832–67), the ancestor of the Sassoons of Ashley Park, and Reuben and Arthur. Arthur Sassoon, who had a shooting lodge at Tulchan, Advie, N.B., where he was reckoned among Highland deerstalkers with the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, was a splendid host, and was most ably assisted by his wife, a daughter of Achille Perugia of Trieste. With Edward Albert, Reuben, and Arthur Sassoon the King was most friendly, often visiting their country houses. The King had a high appreciation of their financial gifts, and Sir Almeric Fitzroy relates that at a "very pleasant luncheon at Hampden House," on 15th March 1904, the Duke of Abercorn humorously represented that the King would be well pleased with a new ministry in which Lord Esher was Prime Minister, Reuben Sassoon Chancellor of Exchequer, "with Knollys in a prominent position as Secretary of State."[2] Possibly in such a ministry both the Marquis de Soveral and Sir Ernest Cassel might have found appropriate positions.

There was some criticism at the time of the prominence in

[1] Sir Philip Sassoon, third Baronet, is their son.
[2] *Memoirs*, p. 193.

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the King's circle of his Jewish friends, but they were more than balanced by friends of British aristocratic descent, among whom were the 8th Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lord Redesdale, Lord Carrington, and the three most brilliant shots in the country—the Hon. Evan Charteris, Lord de Grey, and the Hon. Harry Stonor These were fairly representative of the flower of the peerage, but it must be added that all the best and most interesting personalities in the country were to be found at the court of King Edward VII., whatever their birth or upbringing He had broken out of the narrow official limits that Queen Victoria had kept, and extended his informality of friendliness to all sorts of men, with a royal indifference as to aristocratic opinion. It was freely stated that many of his associates were not always quite reputable, the innuendo presumably being that they were not to be found in Burke or Debrett, but King Edward was broad-minded enough to welcome into the court any who were likely to add to its brilliance or interest by their charm of manner or grasp of affairs. Those who criticised the lowly birth of some of his friends conveniently forgot that even Queen Victoria had placed far greater reliance in the humble-born John Brown than in the majority of those who enviously decried the privileged position of the favoured gillie.

Whatever the criticism, there was indeed no mistaking his great and growing popularity. His understanding and social cleverness were now being appreciated to the full, and it was admitted on all sides that he was proving an unexpectedly successful King. "The King, as King," noted a well-informed and critical diarist on 27th July 1904, "is much more useful than he was as Prince of Wales. He has a great deal of ability, but is always surrounded by a bevy of Jews and a ring of racing people. He has the same luxurious tastes as the Semites, the same love of pleasure and of comfort. Still, he is a *charmeur* and very able."[1]

The court did not lose in vivacity by reason of the feminine element. The Queen herself, by her grace and beauty, added not a little to the brightness of the court, and among the lesser ladies could be reckoned the wittiest and most elegant representatives of the fair sex, in whose society the King delighted. Among the frequent guests to Sandringham was the Hon. Mrs.

[1] Walpurga Paget, *In my Tower*, ii p. 474.

George Keppel, who had married, when still a young girl, a younger son of the Earl of Albemarle. The Keppels had long been a court family, and the Hon. Mrs. George thus came early into contact with the court. Of Junoesque stature, extremely stately, with regular features and a lovely smile, mentally alert, clever in witty repartees, yet kind-hearted to a high degree, Mrs. Keppel quickly won hearts—and kept them. Others who were warmly welcomed were Lady Paget; Mrs. Greville; Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough, the vivacious daughter of W. K. Vanderbilt of New York; Lady Londonderry, a stately and beautiful hostess; Mrs. Arthur Sassoon; Mrs. Willie James, who entertained lavishly at West Dean Park; and the acknowledged beauties, Lady Troubridge, Lady Lonsdale, and Mrs. Cornwallis West. King Edward was one of the most faithful and loyal of friends, and although he had now passed the season when he could be nicknamed "Prince Hal," he remained a chivalrous admirer of bright and witty feminine society.

Last, but not least, in the King's circle of friends was "Cæsar," the King's dog. This long-haired, rough-coated fox-terrier was not exactly distinguished for the aristocratic elegance that marked Queen Alexandra's dogs, but he had a mischievous cheerfulness and a quick intelligence that made him a great favourite. He was deeply attached to his royal master, who pampered him as one would a child. At luncheon Cæsar was frequently permitted to be present, and being no respecter of persons, would at once make for the King, jumping up and pawing for tit-bits. The King rather encouraged Cæsar in the habit, and would often say affectionately to the little terrier, "Do you like your old master?" He would even take him abroad with him, and every night would find Cæsar curled up asleep in any easy-chair to the right of the King's bed. No matter where the King strolled, whether on the beach at Biarritz or in the Rue de la Paix in Paris, Cæsar was always seen at the King's heels, proudly displaying a collar that bore the legend, "I am Cæsar, the King's dog"—and many would have wagered that he knew it!

II

The accession of King Edward thus closed a gloomy period in the history of the British court. For nearly forty years his

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mother, Queen Victoria, had, for the most part, lived in retirement, altogether aloof from general society, shrinking from ceremonial functions, and appearing in public rarely and for very brief periods of time. Her bereavement of 1861 had overcast the rest of her life, and although during the last fifteen years she somewhat modified her scheme of mourning, hospitality, which in the days of the Prince-Consort had been lavish, had dwindled to very modest dimensions. In the early days of her widowhood the Queen had resolutely set her face against inviting as her guests any royal person or any representative of foreign royalty who was not a blood relation, and even in the case of the chosen few she was reluctant to show any elaborate mark of honour. Court entertainments remained few, and were overcast by a solemn ritual. Public functions, in which she unwillingly took part, were few in number, and she gave those who met her at such ceremonies the ungenial impression of boredom. At her dinner-parties at Windsor an atmosphere of gloomy silence and constraint prevailed. The guests rarely raised their voices above a whisper, and all felt that they were in the presence of a Queen who still mourned for her dead husband. She lived for the most part in two or three small rooms at Windsor Castle, and preferred the easier mode of life which was only possible at Osborne or Balmoral. Although indefatigable in her study of affairs of state, her sovereignty lacked the outward signs of dignity and splendour.

The new King had justly resolved to break with the forty-year-old tradition of gloom which attached to the court. Since his marriage in 1863 he had been the acknowledged leader of English society, entering with eager delight into all its ceremonies and recreations, and exercising an unquestioned authority over social etiquette and procedure. Colour, movement, brightness, spaciousness appealed to him, and under his influence society was always vivacious and knew little of torpor. From boyhood the King had perfected himself in all the charms of sympathetic hospitality, and under his auspices royal entertainments acquired a cheerfulness and a sociability which had long been denied them altogether, and had never been equalled in palaces. A full sense of the dignity of his new position called for a certain impressiveness in the social development of court hospitalities, but his genial instinct led him to temper decorum with a touch of

gaiety. London once again became the headquarters of the monarchy, and though Windsor was by no means neglected, the Castle there ceased to overshadow Buckingham Palace as the sovereign's home.

During the later years of Queen Victoria's reign very little had been done towards the internal decoration of the royal residences, especially of Buckingham Palace, where the Queen seldom spent more than the few days necessary for official purposes. The Queen had an established dislike of any change in her surroundings, many of which still continued to the end to remind her of the remote days of her married life. At her express orders the relics of her childhood and married life had been carefully preserved. Both at Windsor and Buckingham Palace there reposed in drawer after drawer, in wardrobe after wardrobe, the accumulations of seventy years—dresses, dolls, china, photographs, bric-à-brac — all had been preserved with the most meticulous care. The majority of the rooms reflected the tastes that were prevalent at the time of the Great Exhibition, and the standard of comfort, sanitation, lighting, and warming was almost equally antiquated.

Buckingham Palace, in fact, required not only alteration, but internal renovation, and cleaning throughout. Even the state rooms required redecoration, especially the entrance hall, which, owing to the discolouring by age of the imitation marble walls, had become so dark and mournful that the King had humorously christened it "The Sepulchre." It was therefore necessary entirely to dismantle the Palace, and to give it a thorough spring-cleaning prior to a rearrangement. The King entrusted this task of rearrangement to Sir Arthur Ellis, Sir Horace Farquhar, and Lord Esher, while Mr. Lionel Cust, his Surveyor of Pictures, was responsible for the hanging of the pictures. One of the first changes thus undertaken was the break-up of the rooms occupied by the Prince Consort, which had remained untouched since his death in 1861. As in each case the rooms were needed for the King's own occupation this sanctity was brought to an end. With the utmost care the relics of his father were removed by the King's personal command to a special room in the Round Tower at Windsor Castle, or else sent to Osborne. Every object in the Queen's private rooms in either palace was carefully preserved. These objects, mostly of very slight intrinsic value,

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but of personal interest, were distributed by the King two or three years later among the members of his family. In everything the King took command in person; Queen Alexandra was not disposed by nature to interfere in such matters, except when they personally affected her.

The work took more than a year, and it was not till 27th March 1902 that the King and Queen left Marlborough House, after forty years of residence, to establish themselves in the official royal residence in London,[1] which now became the centre of the court's activities and festivities, though King Edward took a special pride in Windsor, and enjoyed to the utmost conducting his many guests over the Castle and displaying his treasures. Not only were Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle thus thoroughly overhauled, redecorated, and a new note of light and elegance introduced, but also Balmoral and Holyrood Palace. In such reforms the King took a most active part, supervising every scheme of rearrangement, and at times giving a helping hand to the rehanging of pictures or the placing anew of rare articles in cabinets. Much of the actual work was done under his personal superintendence, even if he could only spare odd quarters of an hour between ministerial interviews. As Mr. Lionel Cust says:

> It was waste of time to ask him to think out a scheme, or to put one to him for which he was not prepared. When you brought him a plan, carefully drawn up, and explained matters as shortly as possible, the King lost no time in decision For instance in arranging pictures, I found it useless to ask the King if I should hang this *there* or another *here* and so on. His mind could not take it in. "Offer it up," he would say, and when "offered up" he would come to see and perhaps put his head on one side, all with a twinkle in his eye, and say, "That is not *amiss*," or perhaps he would at once say that he did not like it. He enjoyed sitting in a room with the men working about him, and liked giving directions himself as to the actual position of pictures.

The King's long acquaintance with the mansions and art collections of his friends made him desirous of showing the world that he too was as grand a *seigneur*, and the valuable

[1] They did not actually move into Buckingham Palace until 12th April, the King in the meantime yachting, and the Queen visiting Denmark for a short holiday.

royal collection of works of art was now so displayed that its great intrinsic value was revealed for the first time. When the palaces were again ready for use, King Edward took a special pleasure in taking his guests round the various rooms and pointing out the more interesting objects. It might have been thought that the incessant duties of public ceremonial had become commonplace in the mind of the King, but he cherished the caskets, trowels, and other objects which had from time to time been presented to him, and his recollection of each occasion was unfailing. He possessed a remarkably acquisitive and retentive memory, but he was aware of the shallowness of his information, and therefore frequently desired Mr. Lionel Cust's attendance as prompter. He showed a great interest in art subjects generally, but more than once confided to Mr. Cust, with that peculiar thickening of his r's, that he did not know much about ar-r-t, but did think he knew something about ar-r-angement.

In one department he was unapproachable. Queen Victoria had accumulated a great number of portraits of her own relatives in addition to those which had descended from earlier generations of the Guelph family. The King knew them all, and was seldom at fault, even with almost unknown members of various Saxon duchies.

Naturally, some objections were made to these palatial changes, as being a slight to Queen Victoria's memory, but King Edward, both as King and as head of the royal family, took a strong and decided line, which did not admit of any argument, though with a blend of natural tact and amiable firmness he tried to stave off any kind of resentment or opposition of which he discerned symptoms. As the changes progressed those who had protested acknowledged the great improvements in general appearance and dignity which were accomplished.[1]

III

With the royal palaces thus renovated, the new court began its activities in brighter surroundings than had been known for forty years. The frigid afternoon "Drawing Rooms" of the

[1] Private information from Mr. Lionel Cust.

Queen's reign were exchanged for bright evening courts which dazzled by their splendour. To the ceremonial routine of the court, from which monotony was inseparable however brilliantly devised, the King reconciled himself with all the cheerfulness that was possible, and kept a friendly word for acquaintances who attended the levées. The King, who, every day of his life, had to perform various duties, some of which were uncongenial to him, depended to a great extent on recreation and amusement in the latter part of the day. The theatre was, as before, a constant attraction, but most welcome were the small dinner-parties of selected friends, followed by a game of bridge. These dinner-parties of varied company frequently included the leaders in art, politics, and diplomacy. They brought the King the desired relief from his ceremonial duties and contributed to his *joie de vivre.*

In London the King and Queen, except on state occasions, maintained strict privacy in their own apartments, but at Windsor Castle they associated themselves much more with their household and their guests, the whole party meeting at dinner every evening in the state dining-room, after which the King would retire to the white drawing-room with the gentlemen for coffee and cigars, while the Queen received the ladies in the green drawing-room, until the King either joined them or settled down to a game of bridge, when the gentlemen were at liberty to join the ladies. The band played in the crimson drawing-room, and occasionally, especially when Lord Fisher was a guest, an impromptu dance would take place. This "country-house" intimacy was not possible in the more stately atmosphere of Buckingham Palace.

In spite of the improved attractions of the royal palaces, the King's love of change of scene underwent no diminution. As in the days before his accession, he repeatedly left his own roof to become the guest of an eminent subject, and there was an end of that aloofness from the political and social leaders of the nation which the widowed Queen had observed so religiously. Moreover, the number of weeks in the year which were spent on the continent were increased rather than lessened after he came to the throne, and the length of his absences from England exceeded any precedent set by former sovereigns. These foreign tours set the seal on the fashionable exodus from England to the continent

for "cures" and recreation. Marienbad and Biarritz were especially singled out for the King's favour, and his love of them did much to ensure their fashionable success.

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The changes that the King thus initiated were quickly followed by the leaders of fashion, and throughout the length and breadth of the country there began that rapid evolution from the dullness and decorum of the Victorian era to the more sociable brightness and vivacity of the Edwardian era.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCLUSION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

I

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It was no period of rejoicing in England's public affairs that coincided with the new King's accession: in no direction could the opening weeks of King Edward's reign be regarded as a glorious epoch in the country's history. The South African war, which had already been a year and a quarter in progress, was pursuing its weary length, and its alternations of victory and defeat seemed to give no prospect of a decisive finish. King Edward felt acutely the eddying fortunes of the Anglo-Boer struggle and yearned for a satisfactory conclusion to the strife which would leave the reputation of his country undiminished; but no such solution was to be found. Finding none, he urged on his ministers the need of more vigorous measures of operation than before, with a view to bringing the war to a speedier close; but his persuasions had little effect, and the warfare meandered along its uncertain path until his reign was nearly eighteen months old.

While the South African war was causing the new King and his subjects continuous anxiety and disappointment, Britain's relations with the Great Powers of Europe failed to restore the prestige which the inability to conquer the Boers had cost her. In every continental country popular enthusiasm for the Boer cause ran high, and though foreign governments abstained from any practical demonstration of hostility, signs of friendship were looked for in vain. No matter where the new King looked in Europe, there were few, if any, tokens of amity.

Russian opinion at this period may be gauged by the letters that passed between the Tsar and King Edward as the

result of an accident. On 22nd May 1901, the King, while yachting in Southampton water on board Sir Thomas Lipton's *Shamrock II.*, narrowly escaped injury through the fall of the mast. He wrote cheerfully to Lady Londonderry (May 26, 1901) that he was "none the worse for the unfortunate incident on board the *Shamrock,* but the more I think of it the more convinced I am that we all on board had a miraculous escape. I wish Sir T. Lipton would give up all idea of trying to win the American Cup with his present yacht. He can have no earthly chance, and she is an unlucky vessel. He is merely wasting his money. He is besides as well known in America as he is here that he really does not require the race as an advertisement." The escape drew from the Tsar a telegraphic expression of joy, which he followed up by a long message of serious political moment. In this letter the Tsar reviewed for his uncle's information the effect which the South African war was producing on England's reputation in his own country. The epistle ran (May 22/June 4, 1901):

MY DEAREST UNCLE BERTIE—Let me once more express my joy at your lucky escape during the trials with the *Shamrock.* Having read the details in the papers, one cannot but wonder that nobody was hurt.

Pray forgive me for writing to you upon a very delicate subject which I have been thinking over for months, but my conscience obliges me at last to speak openly. It is about the South African War, and what I say is only said by your loving nephew.

You remember, of course, at the time when the War broke out what a strong feeling of animosity against England arose throughout the world. In Russia the indignation of the people was similar to that of the other countries. I received addresses, letters, telegrams, etc., in masses, begging me to interfere, even by adopting strong measures. But my principle is not to meddle in other people's affairs; especially as it did not concern my country.

Nevertheless all this weighed morally upon me. I often wanted to write to dear Grandmama to ask her quite privately whether there was any possibility of stopping the War in South Africa. Yet I never wrote to her fearing to hurt her and always hoping that it would soon cease. . . .

In a few months it will be two years that fighting continues in South Africa and with what results?

A small people are desperately defending their country, a

part of their land is devastated, their families flocked together in camps, their farms burnt Of course in war such things have always happened and will happen, but in this case, forgive the expression, it looks more like a war of extermination So sad to think that it is Christians fighting against each other!

How many thousands of gallant young Englishmen have already perished out there! Does not your kind heart yearn to put an end to this bloodshed? Such an act would universally be hailed with joy.

I hope you won't mind my having broached such a delicate question, dear Uncle Bertie, but you may be quite sure that I was guided by a feeling of deep friendship and devotion in writing thus. . . .

With Alix's and my best love, I remain, dear Uncle, Your affectionate nephew, NICKY.

The frankness of the Tsar's comment reflected the family intimacy, and, in spite of its suggestion of censure, roused no resentment in the King. Immediately on its receipt he drafted a note for his secretary in these terms:

Please copy the letter and send it to Lord Salisbury begging him to show it to Lansdowne, Balfour, and Chamberlain. The letter is very kindly meant unless the Emperor has been put up to it by his Ministers or possibly Leyds (Secretary of State to the Transvaal Government). I shall want to know from Lord Salisbury, after having consulted his colleagues, what kind of answer I should send. I wonder if the Emperor wishes to act as mediator, or has been asked to do so. How could we cease hostilities? Nor would the Emperor have done so under similar circumstances. The answer is certainly in the negative.

Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, at once communicated the Tsar's letter to his colleagues and pointed out in a note which he prepared for the King that although the Tsar's previous conduct had been uninfluenced by the misrepresentations of England's action which had circulated on the continent during the last eighteen months, his sentiment was evidently now affected by it. Lord Salisbury described the true character of the war as one forced on Great Britain, and pointed out that it had been conducted with all practicable leniency and that ample precedents for its duration were at hand. On the basis of Lord Salisbury's notes the King addressed to the Tsar the following friendly letter of explanation and remonstrance (June 19, 1901):

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MY DEAREST NICKY—Let me begin my letter by saying how pleased I am to hear that dear Alix is safely over her troubles, but I cannot help sharing your natural disappointment that a fourth daughter instead of a son has been born.[1] Still it is a great blessing to know that "Mother and child" are doing well.

Now let me thank you for your letter of 4th. I can quite understand that it was in every respect repugnant to your feelings to write to me relative to the South African War, though great pressure has been brought to bear upon you. I am also grateful to you for the consideration you have shown during the incessant storm of obloquy and misrepresentation which has been directed against England, from every part of the Continent, during the last 18 months! In your letter you say that in the Transvaal "a small people are desperately defending their country"! I do not know whether you are aware that the war was begun and also elaborately prepared for many years previous by the Boers, and was unprovoked by any single act on the part of England, of which the Boers, according to International Law, had any right to complain. It was preceded a few days before by an ultimatum from the Boers forbidding England to send a single soldier into any part of the vast expanse of South Africa! If England had quietly submitted to this outrage no portion of her Dominions throughout the world would have been safe. Would you have submitted to a similar treatment? Supposing that Sweden, after spending years in the accumulation of enormous armaments and magazines, had suddenly forbidden you to move a single regiment in Finland, and on your refusing to obey had invaded Russia in *three* places, would you have abstained from defending yourself, and when war had once begun by that Swedish invasion, would you not have felt bound, both in prudence and honour, to continue military operations until the enemy had submitted, and such terms had been accepted as would have made such outrages impossible? If the South African campaign were to be stopped at this moment and England were to recall her troops, we should have no security that the Boers would not commence anew the accumulation of armaments and magazines to prepare for another invasion of British territory. It is not extermination that we seek, it is security against a future attack, and against this, after our experience of the past, we are bound to provide.

You are, my dear Nicky, I think under the impression that there is something abnormal in the duration of this war, which makes it differ from other wars in modern times. Many instances

[1] The Grand Duchess Anastasia was born on June 5/18, 1901.

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might be cited to prove that this belief is a mistake, but I will confine my references to cases which have arisen during the half century which has just closed. In these cases it will appear that the great nations involved were compelled to continue their military operations for a longer time than has yet been occupied by the British Generals in South Africa.

In 1857 the Indian Mutiny broke out, which was not only a Mutiny, but a revolt of many semi-independent populations. It began on May 10th 1857, and terminated with the capture of Tantia Topee on April 8th 1859, having lasted 23 months. About the same time the Russian war in the Caucasus came to an end with the capture of Schamyl in 1859, though it had lasted ever since 1834! Its duration thus amounted to a period of no less than 25 years! Two years afterwards a war broke out between the Northern and Southern States of America. It lasted from the capture of Fort Sumter in April 1861 to the battle of Richmond in April 1865, a covering period of 4 years. Other cases might be quoted, but these will suffice to show that within that half century there were three cases in which very powerful nations were compelled to continue hostilities for periods exceeding by many months the time which has hitherto been occupied by our Generals in South Africa, who commenced their operations in November 1899, some 20 months ago. It has certainly never been imputed to those who had the conduct of the wars in India, in the Caucasus, and in North America that they were prosecuting "a war of extermination." It is a reproach to which the British Generals in South Africa are still less exposed, for the unexampled leniency with which they applied the laws of war to their prisoners has naturally lengthened the campaign. It is impossible to see into the future, but we have every reason to hope that the end is now not far off, and we entertain no doubts whatever that when peace and order have been fully restored, the territories which belonged to the two Republics will enjoy in a full measure the tranquillity and good government which England has never yet failed to assure to the populations which have come under her sway.

Pray forgive my having written to you at such length, but I am anxious that I should give your letter a full answer, and express the views which I and my Government feel on the subject.

Believe me, your very affectionate Uncle,

EDWARD R.

To this missive, in which the historical researches of Lord Salisbury were embodied in the King's own words, the Tsar apparently made no reply. But the correspondence suffices to show the deep feeling against England which had been excited

in all European countries, and King Edward's eager desire to assuage it.

Germany, or more strictly, the Kaiser, alone professed any desire to act in effective concert with England. The Kaiser, who had prolonged his stay in England after the Queen's death by way apparently of proving his sympathies with his mother's country, was profuse in protestations of readiness to help, but the new King and his ministers were too well acquainted with him to place any firm reliance on his advances.

It was, for the moment, a bewildering situation for the new sovereign, who, while he was convinced of the perils of England's continued isolation, saw no clear way of assuaging the distrust with which the continental powers regarded England. The concerted action of the great powers in China had only served to accentuate international differences. Yet King Edward, although he formulated no definite policy, cherished the ambition of applying his personal influence to the inauguration of an era of peace and harmony. His long experience while heir-apparent forbade any under-estimation of the forces of disunion, but from the early days of his reign he hoped that he might help to lay on sound foundations a series of good understandings between England and the rest of the world, including Germany. The first step towards this ideal seemed to him to be the conclusion of the South African war.

II

Amid the perplexities and anxieties of the protracted campaign and the hostile attitude of the continental press the King recognised the need of encouraging the forces in the field and their leaders. In the middle of the year 1901, with a view to arresting the scattered activities of the enemy, Lord Kitchener, who had succeeded Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa at the end of 1900, erected along the railway lines and on the banks of rivers a long series of blockhouses in near touch with one another. At the same time he removed the dependants —women and children—of the Boer burghers in the field to concentration camps in Natal, of which the organisation and administration were subjects of severe criticism by the "pro-Boer" party at home. In particular the criticism by Sir

Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who was the head of the "pro-Boer" section of the Liberal party, caused the King much disquietude. On 31st May 1901 Campbell-Bannerman denounced at a Liberal meeting at Edinburgh "the most unworthy policy of enforcing unconditional surrender upon those who were to be their loyal and contented subjects in the new colonies," and a fortnight later in London he taunted the government with having lately described the war as "not yet entirely terminated," adding the comment: "A phrase often used is 'war is war'; but when one came to ask about it one was told that no war was going on—that it was not a war. When was a war not a war? When it was carried on by *methods of barbarism* in South Africa."

The King read these pro-Boer outbursts with much perturbation, and finally, on 8th July, he asked Lord Salisbury whether it would be prudent for him in a personal interview to request Sir Henry to avoid with care "any language which might be interpreted abroad or in South Africa as an encouragement to the Boers." Lord Salisbury dissuaded the King from taking such a course on the ground that the Liberal party was much divided over the war and that the King's intervention might be regarded as an undue interference with the internal strife of the party. It was with grave misgiving that the King agreed to this view, and he felt no little compunction in meeting Sir Henry socially for some time

III

The King showed great interest in all reports from South Africa, and was particularly anxious that everything should be done to assist Lord Kitchener. He was much disturbed when, in August 1901, Mr. Brodrick, the Secretary of State for War, informed him that Lord Kitchener in his private letters showed some uneasiness as to carrying out a reduction of the forces in the field to which he had agreed, and complained of the quality of the new troops which were being sent out to him. The King replied from Homburg on 31st August:

The King thanks Mr. Brodrick for his communication of the 28th instant, and although he quite understands the anxiety on the part of the Government to withdraw not only the troops

lent by India but also the Militia Regiments, he is firmly convinced that the only way to bring the war to a close is to allow Lord Kitchener an entirely free hand and not to hamper him with considerations as to whether Parliament will have to be called together in the autumn. The King is glad to hear that Mr. Brodrick has suspended giving any directions for the withdrawal of troops and feels sure he will see the extreme importance of being guided entirely by Lord Kitchener's advice in this matter.

The King read with considerable surprise Lord Kitchener's remarks on the Imperial Yeomanry and thinks it incredible, after all the experience the authorities have had, that a force of yeomanry should have been sent out, the greater part of whom, according to Lord Kitchener, were totally unable to ride and knew no drill, while a very large number appear to have been medically unfit for active service.

This would seem to point either to some grave defect in the system the War Office has adopted or to some very culpable neglect on the part of the officer responsible.

The King is inclined to the latter belief, and hopes Mr. Brodrick will have a searching inquiry made and see that those who were responsible for this blunder are removed from the positions they occupy.

Again and again the King urged that every support should be given to Lord Kitchener, and protested vigorously against the shackles that were placed on his military operations by the Colonial Office.

" The King," Sir Arthur Davidson wrote to Mr. Brodrick on 29th September 1901, " is greatly concerned with regard to the position of Lord Kitchener in South Africa, who is seriously hampered in his military operations by considerations forced on him from the Colonial Office point of view which effectually prevent his carrying out in their entirety military plans which must necessarily include the restriction of liberty of action in places where this freedom has been grossly abused.

" It seems ridiculous to carry out a series of manœuvres and operations inland against the Boers, when no drastic means are adopted to stop the supply of men, arms, and ammunition furnished to them through Cape Colonial Ports.

" The King sees the many great difficulties which surround both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner in giving Lord Kitchener a free hand, but His Majesty thinks that at present Lord Kitchener is not accorded enough freedom of action, and he, therefore, hopes you will bring your influence, as Head of the Military Department, to bear on Mr. Chamberlain to induce him to see

how impossible it is to expect Lord Kitchener to conclude the war unless he is allowed to adopt means which will effectually prevent his adversaries from replenishing their supplies of men and material.

"The King thinks that unless something of this sort is done Lord Kitchener will resign, which would have both morally and materially a disastrous effect, and which ought, therefore, at any cost to be averted."

Mr. Brodrick in his reply, 6th October 1901, promised every assistance to Lord Kitchener, adding that Mr. Balfour, the Leader of the House of Commons, would speak in public shortly and would make it clear that ministers were giving Lord Kitchener every possible support.

The King, although he lent an ear to some criticism of Lord Kitchener's tendency to control everything himself, and thereby to restrict the responsibilities of his subordinates, was constantly urging on the War Office his firm conviction "that the only way to bring this war to a close is to allow Lord Kitchener an entirely free hand." It was a characteristic trait of his to support "the man on the spot," and many were the times during his reign when he exerted the whole of his influence in favour of Britain's representative abroad against the views of ministers or civil servants at home.

IV

By this time the King had begun to feel some of that depression which the indecisive prolongation of the conflict was causing throughout the country, and on 20th November 1901 he wrote despondently to Lord Salisbury that there was

apparently no hope of its coming to an end for a long time. The strain on the resources of the country is becoming very great. Additional taxation must ensue, and the amount of troops now in South Africa is becoming most serious, should they at any emergency be required elsewhere.

Yet he lost no opportunity of urging on both the ministers at home and the generals in the field every measure which was calculated to bring it to an end. He frequently complained to his ministers that the information which officers forwarded from the scene of operations was often inadequate, and pressed on the cabinet the desirability of remedying this defect His interest

in the struggle even went so far as to lead him to suggest to the Secretary of War (November 24) the distribution of fresh troops arriving in South Africa, urging that

> the new troops arriving in South Africa should be employed in the first instance in completing General French's operations in Cape Colony, and that the remounts, of which over 12,000 are now on the sea, should be allowed proper rest on arrival.

This suggestion met with the entire approval of the cabinet, and Mr. Brodrick telegraphed to Lord Kitchener accordingly.

Meanwhile there had been much dissatisfaction with the methods sanctioned by the War Office for the supply of horses to the army in South Africa. The remounts proved of poor quality, and charges of incompetence or corruption were brought in the House of Commons early in the session of 1902 against the responsible officers, especially regarding the purchase of horses in Hungary by a Captain Hartigan. A Committee of the House of Commons reported on 30th January 1902, and advised drastic reform of the Remount Department. The King, writing to Mr. Brodrick on 2nd February, said:

> The "show-up" about the horses purchased for South Africa is a great scandal and even worse than I thought after reading Friday's debate in the House of Commons. How can a man like Captain Hartigan, who passed the Remounts, be still employed? Justly the War Office are seriously to blame, and there has been an official blindness as to what was going on in the War Office which is very reprehensible. I am surprised that more was not said on the subject in the House.

Again on 6th February he continued his observations on the subject, and pressed for a thorough investigation, adding the emphatic comment: "There is no doubt that someone will have to be hung for it."

In October 1902 a departmental report strongly censured General Truman's conduct of the Remount Department during the war, but the King, in autograph notes on the margin of the copy forwarded to him, caustically condemned the general's superiors for denying him efficient subordinates.

Incidents such as these led to friction amongst those who were charged with the conduct of the war. At times Lord Kitchener felt that he was inadequately supported by the Secretary of

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State for War, and in a fit of depression finally announced his resolve to retire (November 1901). Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, had already suggested him, with his own enthusiastic assent, for the command of the Indian Army. But the King deemed it premature to consider a fresh appointment. He was not convinced of Lord Kitchener's qualification for high military duty in India; above all he insisted that both the country's and Lord Kitchener's prestige made it obligatory for the general to bring to a victorious end the South African war. After reading various private letters from Lord Kitchener and others, the King wrote to Mr. Brodrick from Windsor Castle on 14th November 1901:

I regret to see how fagged out Kitchener seems to be, and how he longs to get away and have some rest, but I do not see how it is possible. If Roberts were to go out as he suggests and relieve Kitchener it would be tantamount to letting the world at large know that we have no more confidence in the latter. Then Curzon's idea that Kitchener should go to India is simply preposterous, as the latter has never been in India in his life. How could he suddenly go there for the sake of rest? Nor would I imagine that the change of climate would be of any advantage to him. Unless Kitchener is *really* seriously ill he should remain at his post and see the war out, or it would have a deplorable effect and damage the prestige of the Army in a terrible way.

By the turn of year, however, Lord Kitchener was more optimistic, with the result that Mr. Brodrick again urged that he should be promised an early transfer to India, and in reply to the King's objection that Lord Kitchener had never been in India, pointed out that Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, knew little about India prior to his acceptance of the Viceroyalty, but that had not prevented him from making a thorough success of his appointment.

"I cannot help being amused," the King replied on 2nd February 1902, "at the hurry you are in to send Kitchener to India before you know how long his services in South Africa may be required. Certainly in his enclosed telegram to you of 31st ult. he seems to think the war will be over before June. Nobody wishes that his prophecy may come true more sincerely than I do, but upwards of a year ago Roberts said the war was virtually over! I have still grave doubts whether Kitchener is the right man for Commander-in-Chief in India, as

he has absolutely no knowledge of the country and people, but I know how anxious you are for it. The reason why Curzon is making so good a Viceroy is that besides his great personal ability he has personal knowledge of the country."

Mr. Brodrick in reply (February 3) pointed out that he had offered Lord Kitchener a new post at the War Office as Chief of Staff, but that he had declined the appointment. India was his ambition, and if he were disappointed he would leave the service or go on retired pay. Mr. Brodrick concluded his letter by a polite demur to the King's reiterated statement that Lord Kitchener had "absolutely no knowledge of the country or the people." Finally the King yielded to the urgency of Mr. Brodrick and Lord Curzon, and it was settled that Sir Power Palmer's term of office as Commander-in-Chief in India should be extended until October 1902, when he would vacate it in favour of Lord Kitchener, who would then be free to take up the position. Writing to Mr. Brodrick on 4th February 1902 the King accepted the inevitable:

As you tell me that the Viceroy is so very anxious to get him out to India for the responsible post he has to fill, I will make no further remonstrance and only hope that it may answer. Of his great military capacity there can be no doubt, and I will not again allude to the points I have so often made against the appointment.

Nine months later, on 28th November 1902, Lord Kitchener arrived in India as Commander-in-Chief, and one of his first duties was to put a few final military touches to King Edward VII.'s Coronation Durbar which the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, was preparing on a magnificent scale.

V

Meanwhile an incident occurred which led the King to insist on the strict maintenance of discipline through all ranks of the army. In the autumn of 1901 Sir Redvers Buller, on his return from his chequered career in South Africa, infringed the Army Regulations by publicly replying to strictures passed on him by the press. Sir Redvers, who was on terms of personal intimacy with the King, had been nominated to the command of the First Army Corps at Aldershot on relinquishing his South African

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command, but public opinion was sceptical as to the justice of so high a promotion in view of the general's failures in Natal, and it was scarcely reassured by the official explanation that he was only to fill the high military post for two years (instead of normal five) in view of the fact that he had already spent some time in the Aldershot Command before going out to South Africa. Unfortunately Buller could not keep silent under the press censure, and replied vigorously in a long diatribe which he delivered at a public luncheon to the Queen's Westminster Volunteers on 10th October 1901. A prompt intimation from the Secretary of State for War that unless he resigned forthwith he would be deprived of the Aldershot Command and placed on half-pay led Sir Redvers to appeal direct to the King against the War Office action. The King, however, concurred fully in the decision of Mr. Brodrick, which was also approved by the Commander-in-Chief, the Prime Minister, and Mr. Balfour, the Leader of the House of Commons, and he replied to Sir Redvers' appeal with a plainly worded refusal:

"Please inform Sir Redvers Buller," he wrote from Balmoral on 19th October 1901, "that I have received his appeal and have given it the most careful consideration; that I felt most deeply, and with the greatest concern, the painful position in which so distinguished an Officer, who has rendered such valuable services, who has held some of the highest and most important commands, and who is an old friend of mine, has placed himself.

"At the same time I should fail in, what is to me, a most painful duty, were I not to add that I concur in the view which the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War, and the Leader of the House of Commons entertain in regard to his case, and I therefore have approved of the recommendation which Mr. Brodrick has made to me."

On 23rd October an official notice deprived Sir Redvers of his command, to which Lieut.-General Sir John French (afterwards Lord Ypres) was nominated. The punishment was severe, and its only justification was that General Sir Redvers Buller, in defending himself when attacked, had disregarded the traditions of a fighting service!

VI

One of the unfortunate features of the early South African campaign was the proved inefficiency of the army medical

service. A Royal Commission of Inquiry had been appointed in July 1900, and had reported on the day of the Queen's death. As soon as Parliament met Mr. Brodrick announced that a complete reorganisation of the medical service would be undertaken.

With the assistance of leading members of the medical profession, a new scheme was drafted in the summer of 1901. The report recommended improved pay for medical officers, nurses, etc., at an increased cost of £80,000 per year. Mr. Brodrick, in sending this report to the King, who was at Homburg, pointed out that members of the Army Medical Corps were so little esteemed by their fellow-officers that they were frequently blackballed at military clubs, and he added that he would be glad if the Commander-in-Chief could have authority to use His Majesty's name in representing to the committees of these clubs the undesirability of the practice. The King, who was thoroughly in accord with the endeavour to improve the qualifications and status of army doctors, and to place them on a social level with other military officers, was emphatic in reply (August 29):

> The King has read with great interest the report on the proposed scheme for the reorganisation of the Army Medical Corps, and wishes to thank Mr. Brodrick for having devoted so much of his time to this important subject. He feels sure that the excellent results that have been achieved are in no small measure due to the fact that Mr. Brodrick himself presided at the meetings of the Committee.
>
> The last paragraph of Mr. Brodrick's letter, however, implies that he is not very hopeful about securing a better class of Officer. The opinion of military clubs is only perhaps an exaggerated form of the opinion of Regiments, and if the new class of Officer proved acceptable to Regiments, there would be no more blackballing of members of that Corps as a whole.
>
> The King is inclined to think that sufficient attention has not been paid to the difficult problem of how to make this service more popular and attractive, and feels convinced that until this is done, no real improvement can be effected. . . .

Some little time was to elapse before the Army Medical Corps became sufficiently "popular and attractive" to the "better class of officer," and in the meantime vaster questions of army reorganisation compelled the King's attention.

In his desire to see the army brought up to a more efficient standard the King frequently compared notes with an army

officer in whom he had the greatest faith—Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Kelly-Kenny—and whose industry, administrative capacity, and dislike of jobbery appealed to the King. Yet, ironically enough, Sir Thomas was thoroughly conservative in his attitude to reform, and neither Mr. Brodrick nor Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, shared the King's high opinion of him. In August 1901 the King suggested him for the post of Adjutant-General, rendered vacant by the retirement of Sir Evelyn Wood, and in spite of War Office opposition secured his appointment. Mr. Brodrick now became anxious to make the new Adjutant-General far more dependent on the Commander-in-Chief than hitherto, and the King (August 19, 1901) agreed that "a certain amount of clipping of the A.G.'s powers is necessary, but he thinks this should be carefully done, as too much clipping might make the A G. nothing more than a cipher"; and when a month later the War Secretary, in revising a draft order respecting the duties of the Commander-in-Chief, laid it down that "in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief the senior officer of the Headquarters Staff should act for him," the King at once protested, pointing out that he looked upon "the A.G. as the Commander-in-Chief's *Second* in Command, and thinks that a deviation from this principle would lessen his authority and be too drastic a change to be advisable. . . ." The protest concluded with the hint that "the King also wishes to remind Mr. Brodrick that the Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General have always been considered as the King's A.G. and the King's Q.M.G., so that with regard to any important or special changes, formulated by those departments, the King may be kept informed with respect to their inception and progress. . . ."

Kelly-Kenny, "the King's A.G.," however, failed to work very smoothly with his colleagues, and various baits were dangled before him to make him relinquish his post. A year later, in August 1902, he was offered the command of the 4th Army Corps, but declined, to the King's unqualified satisfaction. Three months later (October 15, 1902), when the question was again raised of transferring Kelly-Kenny to the command of an Army Corps, the King wrote to Mr. Brodrick:

In the Adjutant-General the Army and War Office have a most competent officer, who has a thorough knowledge of his

profession and who, if ever placed in command of an Army Corps, would, I consider, be a great loss to the War Office. In speaking to him frequently on military matters he seems to me quite of the advanced school, which shares your views in many necessary changes. To my great surprise Lord Hornby told me here (Newmarket) yesterday that Sir T. Kelly-Kenny was most reactionary in his views concerning the Army!

In view of the King's decided expression of opinion no further effort was made to entice Kelly-Kenny away from the War Office, and Kelly-Kenny retained his post of Adjutant-General until the reorganisation of 1904.

VII

The despondency which the prolongation of the war was causing the King and his people was greatly accentuated by the capture, on 7th March 1902, of a British column consisting of 900 mounted troops, 300 infantry, five guns and a convoy, which was moving by night under the command of General Lord Methuen from Vryburg to Lichtenburg. A Boer force under General Delarey suddenly overwhelmed the British force, and after a stubborn and costly resistance the British general, who was severely wounded, surrendered. The disaster was a mere episode in the general campaign, in which the British were clearly gaining the upper hand, but public feeling at home was greatly roused by the tragedy. The King himself was deeply distressed by the news, and at once wrote to Mr. Brodrick:

The news I received from you at 7.30 this evening has deeply grieved me, and I know how much you and indeed all the members of my Government will feel it. Methuen prisoner with many others and the surprise and subsequent rout is a national disaster. There may be a chance of considerable exaggeration, and one can only hope it may not be as serious as it looks. The effect on the Boers and the war generally will be very detrimental to us, and I now feel very anxious. I shall be back in town at 4.30 to-morrow, and I should much have liked to see you at Marlborough House if you could call at any time between 5 and 7.30.

A week later (March 15, 1902), on receipt of more definite news, he wrote to Mr. Brodrick:

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Kitchener's telegram of 14th inst., of the account of capture of Methuen's column, is more deplorable than words can describe. It is really disgraceful. If these things go on we must make up our minds to indefinite prolongation of the war. How could Methuen have been so foolhardy as to make night marches ?

The result of this set-back was a more vigorous prosecution of the war. The continued displays of ill-feeling in France and Germany prompted offers of further contingents from New Zealand, Australia, and Canada, which the government promptly accepted. Towards the end of the month the enemy were showing signs of exhaustion, and it was estimated that no more than 9000 Boers remained in the field. Their leaders proposed the reopening of negotiations for peace, which Lord Kitchener and the home government encouraged. In April Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener twice met the Boer delegates in conference. The home government naturally left much to the discretion of their representatives on the spot, and the whole matter of the terms was in suspense as far as the King and the government knew for some weeks, though on 26th April the King predicted that "peace will be declared in three weeks" In the course of this position of affairs the King was astonished to receive on 2nd May the following telegram from the Kaiser :

Through a private channel, from South Africa, the peace conditions proposed by your Government have been communicated to me. I think them most liberal, and fervently hope and trust that the Boers will be wise enough to conclude peace in adopting them.

The King, who was in complete ignorance as to the peace conditions, immediately sent the Kaiser's telegram to the Prime Minister, and invited an explanation. Lord Salisbury informed the King that no information had been received "of such terms being offered by the British general," and the mystification was complete the next day when, in accordance with "most secret" instructions from the Foreign Office, Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin, applied for an audience with the Kaiser and was invited to dine with him that evening. The Kaiser expressed confidence in the information which had reached him, and offered Lascelles details which proved, in the event, to be generally accurate.

"On receipt this morning of your most secret telegram," Lascelles reported, "I applied through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an audience of the Emperor, who invited me to dinner to-night. His Majesty said that the conditions of peace, which he had been informed by an excellent authority in South Africa had been offered by His Majesty's Government, were that unconditional surrender would no longer be required, but that an honourable peace would be concluded as between two belligerents, and after a certain time the Colonies should be given self-government, that £5,000,000 should be paid for the rebuilding of the farms, that an amnesty should be granted to the Cape rebels, who, however, should be deprived of franchise for a certain number of years. The Emperor did not tell me who his informant was, but said that his accuracy might be relied on, and he had stated as a fact that the above proposals had been made."

The Kaiser clearly commanded exceptional sources of information which would almost seem to have been superior to those enjoyed by the King or his ministers, and the King's chagrin at this unpalatable fact was unconcealed. The result was that from 3rd May onwards the King and the government were kept better informed of what was taking place in South Africa.

After a further month's delay the Boers agreed to relinquish any further claim to the independence of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, having ascertained that there was no hope of European interference on their behalf. During the course of these negotiations Lord Kitchener was in constant communication with the home government, and every changing proposal was submitted to the King. Finally terms were arranged, and on 31st May a treaty of peace was signed at Pretoria whereby the Boer Republics were re-incorporated in the British Empire. Assurance was given by the British government that the Boer burghers who were in the field outside the Boer Colonies should be repatriated, that the farms injured in the warfare should be restored, that representative institutions should as soon as possible be set up in the Boer provinces, that an amnesty should be granted to active sympathisers in Cape Colony and Natal, and that the Dutch language should receive equal recognition with English in the schools and law courts. A grant of £3,000,000 was to be applied to resettlement of the Boers in their homes.

There was general satisfaction at the humane tone of the terms of peace, and the King at once interpreted the universal

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sentiment at home by publishing on 2nd June the following message:

> The King has received the welcome news of the cessation of hostilities in South Africa with infinite satisfaction, and trusts that peace may be speedily followed by the restoration of prosperity in his new dominions, and that the feelings necessarily engendered by war will give place to the earnest co-operation of all his Majesty's South African subjects in promoting the welfare of their common country.

On the previous day the King sent congratulations to Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener, to the troops in South Africa, and to the ministers who had been mainly identified with the conduct of the war. He promptly approved the proposal that Lord Kitchener should be promoted to a Viscounty and to the rank of General, desiring the promotions to be announced at once, and he invited both Houses of Parliament, 4th June, to make the victorious General a grant of £50,000.[1] But one honour he kept back until the General's return in July—the honour of the newly created Order of Merit With the approval of the Prime Minister the King communicated the terms of the settlement to the Kaiser through Sir Frank Lascelles, who replied next day:

> On receipt of your Majesty's telegram at 7.30 P.M last night, I at once sent letter to the Emperor at Potsdam and have received telegram of which following is a paraphrase:
> "Your letter just received on going to bed. Heaven be praised for these glad tidings! After all you see I was quite well informed when a month ago I told you about proposals for peace and their probable acceptance!"

With the declaration of peace there began a new era in the history of South Africa. The states that had been the main scene of the fighting, the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, were placed under the Governorship of Lord Milner, who was given almost a free hand in the work of settlement. More than that, the peace brought to an end the continuous friction between

[1] A year earlier, on 24th May 1901, Sir Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner, arrived in London on leave in order to consult the home government as to future policy of reconstruction in South Africa. Lord Salisbury had suggested to the King three days earlier the bestowal on the pro-consul of a peerage, and the King, with the Prime Minister's concurrence, claimed the right of first announcing personally to Sir Alfred the conferment of the honour when he received him on his arrival at Marlborough House on 13th June.

Great Britain and Europe generally, and paved the way to an era of understanding.

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In England itself the news of the conclusion of peace was received with whole-hearted joy and enthusiasm, and great preparations were made for the Coronation ceremony on 26th June, which was thus likely to become a national expression of jubilation at a victorious and magnanimous peace.

VIII

The South African War had taught Great Britain many lessons, not the least of which was the necessity for a thorough reorganisation of the army. The disappointments and humiliations of the war had deepened the general feeling that the military arrangements of this country should be put on a sounder footing. King Edward was eager for drastic reforms, and as early as August 1901 had strongly urged an inquiry "searching into the many blunders we had made in South Africa," but when in the following April the cabinet, after considering the question, finally decided to appoint a Royal Commission of investigation, the proceedings of which would be made public, the King raised objections to "washing one's dirty linen in public." As he wrote to Lord Salisbury on 13th June 1902:

The King has received your Cabinet note of yesterday, and he greatly deprecates the conclusions arrived at that a general inquiry into the conduct of the war should be conducted by a Royal Commission. The King saw Lord Salisbury last week and urged him not to consent to such an inquiry which Queen Victoria had also desired should not take place.

The Government is a very strong one with a large Parliamentary majority, why therefore should Ministers pledge themselves to give way to demands from independent M.P.'s? The proposed inquiry will do the Army and also the Country harm in the eyes of the civilised world. No good can come of it, but it is to be hoped that we may profit by the many mistakes, which have doubtless occurred during the campaign, by a thorough re-organisation of the War Office. . . . This system of "washing one's dirty linen in public" the late Queen had a horror of, and the King shares the views of his beloved Mother. Therefore he most earnestly wishes that the Cabinet should endorse them.

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Lord Salisbury, however, replied that he could not overrule the decision of the cabinet, as the King appeared to suggest. It was, the Prime Minister wrote, "a question of honourable adherence to a pledge," and for him to oppose his colleagues in the matter would be to "break up the government," and to give the public the impression that "so extreme a course had been taken for the purpose of concealing matters which would not bear disclosure." The King raised no further protest to the method of inquiry and accepted, with constitutional correctness, the advice of his first minister. He took, however, a keen interest in the personnel of the new Royal Commission, and at once suggested Lord Esher as a member. There was some initial difficulty in appointing a chairman. Both Lord Spencer and Mr. Asquith declined the offer of the post, which was finally accepted by Lord Elgin. The Commission first met in August 1902, and after each sitting of the Commission Lord Esher sent incisive and interesting reports of the proceedings to the King. Finally, on 23rd August 1903, the report of the Commission was issued.

The Commissioners made no recommendations for army reform, but merely summarised and placed on record what they considered to be the important points in the evidence they had heard. Their report disclosed a serious state of affairs in the organisation of the army, and a state of unpreparedness for war was revealed which could only be described as appalling. There could be no question as to the condemnation contained in the report, for though its verdict was in some respects favourable as to the military side of the administration, the report on the whole deepened the belief that serious change was needed.

The King had already been an acute critic of the administration of Mr. Brodrick (afterwards Viscount Midleton), who had been War Minister since 1900. He feared that Mr. Brodrick was inclined too often to overrule the opinions of military colleagues, and especially to ignore the views of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts. The King's activity of criticism caused the Secretary of State some concern, and after a long audience on 13th October 1902, Mr. Brodrick summarised, in a letter to the King, his various difficulties, which were not, he said, lightened by the King's comments. It was evident that Mr. Brodrick felt keenly the King's assertion that he was taking too much upon his shoulders and left too little to his military colleagues. The

King explained his general attitude in a long autograph reply which he wrote from Newmarket on 15th October. He thanked the minister for giving him a clear insight into his very difficult position.

"You need never fear," he continued, "that I shall not always give you my heartiest support in all matters concerning the reform of the Army, which is so much needed. But at the same time you must expect my criticisms, and they will doubtless be frequently at variance with your own views.

"One of your greatest difficulties is, I know, in dealing with questions asked in the House of Commons. The head of every Department has to undergo such trying ordeals, but if the case is a good one a simple and true answer is the best in the long run, and sometimes, especially for a Minister, 'Silence is Gold.'

"At all times it will give me the greatest pleasure to discuss any matters relating to the Army, in which I take the deepest interest, with you, and though I feel that reforms in the Army are most essential as an outcome of the South African War, the War Office needs also very great reforms so as to make it thoroughly efficient."

As in many other matters the King was asserting his constitutional position as an encourager, adviser, and critic of his ministers. Nominally he was head of the army, and as such he wanted the army to be efficient, well-organised, and prepared, and not even the most purblind admirer of the British army could assert, in 1902, that in these directions there was no possible scope for improvement. The King headed the advance guard of army reformers.

CHAPTER V

THE CORONATION

I

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THE King had been in no haste to fix a date for his Coronation, and it was not till 28th June 1901 that a proclamation was made that the ceremony would take place in that month of the following year. The King was a lover of ceremony, and in the details of the Coronation he took the greatest interest. There were a few changes in the normal procedure, in part due to his personal circumstances, which lent new features to the elaborate programme. From the first he laid it down that "crowned heads should not come, only representatives, owing to the extreme difficulty of precedence." Nor would he encourage the attendance of any reigning princes[1] As it was, questions of precedence proved difficult. The King was anxious that Germany should be represented by the Crown Prince, and was willing to place him before the heirs-apparent of Russia, Austria, and Italy. But the Kaiser raised objections: he mentioned rumours of frivolous conduct on his son's last visit to England which made him unwilling to let the Crown Prince come again, preferring that he should remain at his studies Although the high officers of the Kaiser's court urged him to give way, he proved obdurate, and forbade his eldest son's attendance. The Kaiser was thus the only European sovereign who failed to accept an invitation on behalf of his heir, much to the chagrin of the King, who wrote to Sir Frank Lascelles (April 16, 1902):

The King is very much obliged for your telegram and letter and for all the trouble you have taken to carry out his wishes, which he thought were very simple ones. However, the Emperor

[1] King to Lansdowne, 1st June 1901.

has chosen not to meet his wishes with regard to his eldest son coming to England for the Coronation, and is now the only sovereign who has not sent his Heir. The King will now adhere to the list of precedence for the Coronation which has been circulated among the Courts of Europe, and will make no change.

The King was also anxious for the presence of the Kaiser's brother and his wife, Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia, but he did not see his way to place Prince Henry, "who has six nephews before him in the line of succession," before any Crown Prince, even of a minor power, though he offered to place him at the head of representatives of royal families after the heirs of all sovereigns, and it was on this understanding that Prince Henry came as the representative of the Kaiser.

The King was also keenly interested in the representation of France, and as early as 4th December 1901 took steps through the Foreign Office to let the French Government know that Admiral Bienaimé, who had attended the Queen's funeral, and was known by the King to be well disposed towards England, would be *persona grata*. But in the event France was represented by Admiral Gervais.

Russia, Italy, Denmark, Rumania, Portugal, Saxony, Greece, Sweden and Norway, Siam, Montenegro, and Belgium were all to be represented by their respective heirs to the throne. Austria was to be represented by the ill-fated Archduke Franz Ferdinand; the United States by Mr. Whitelaw Reid; Spain by the Prince of Asturias; China by Prince Tsai Chen, and Japan by Prince Akihito Komatsu. All other countries and principalities were represented, and there was every indication that for splendour and magnificence the Coronation of King Edward VII. would be unparallelled in history.

II

It was a well-authenticated tradition that a Coronation should be the occasion of a distribution of honours, and the King, who had long taken a great interest in these state rewards, now desired to exercise to the full the royal influence in this regard, but he was faced with the fact that the sovereign had long ceased to be in any literal sense the only "fountain of honour." On the Prime Minister, as the wielder of supreme

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executive power, there had devolved the right of distributing honours to political friends without anything but a nominal supervision by the Crown. King Edward accepted the system much as he found it, but he insisted with more than his mother's tenacity on the submission for his criticism of the list of the Prime Minister's nominees, and deprecated any undue liberality in the bestowal of decorations for party services. Quite early in the reign he scrutinised rigorously suggestions for Lord-Lieutenants of counties and Lords-in-Waiting, and was impatient with any recommendations on purely party grounds, preferring somebody he himself knew and felt that he could trust Wherever outside the political sphere the precedents of his mother's reign had preserved the sovereign's title to confer honours, he brooked no ministerial interference.

The King's first birthday as monarch, 9th November 1901, had been celebrated with a modest distribution of honours, and he had deprecated the issue of a New Year's list in addition, but he was particularly anxious to recognise the national character of the Coronation ceremony, and in May 1902 he began to consider the honours to be conferred. He desired "to keep the (Coronation) list within the limits adopted at the time of the Diamond Jubilee," and several peerages which personal friends recommended he passed over. To one such recommendation from the Duke of Devonshire, in favour of a peerage for Mr. Michael Biddulph, who had been a Liberal and Liberal-Unionist Member of Parliament since 1865, the King replied through Lord Knollys (May 19, 1902):

> The King desires me to assure you that he would have been only too glad to have met your wishes in regard to a Peerage for Mr. Biddulph on the occasion of the Coronation, if he had felt himself at liberty to have done so.
>
> He has, however, gone through the list of the proposed Peerage two or three times with Lord Salisbury, and it was finally settled some days ago. He is, moreover, unwilling to add to the number of these creations as it exceeds by two the Peerages made at the time of the "Diamond Jubilee."
>
> If the Prime Minister recommends Mr. Biddulph for one of the "Birthday" Peerages on 9th of next November the King directs me to say that he shall be very happy to approve of it.

True to his word, when Mr. Biddulph was recommended for a

peerage by the Prime Minister in the course of the next year, the King signified his approval of the honour.

The King was specially anxious to give to the list of Coronation honours a predominantly national and non-party colour. In this spirit he offered, with the approval of Lord Salisbury, high dignities to several prominent Liberals in letters addressed to them in his own hand. When offering a viscounty to Sir William Harcourt he wrote of his desire to recognise, on both national and personal grounds, his services to the state in the high offices which he had filled. Sir William, however, declined the honour on the ground that he was reluctant to leave the House of Commons of which he had been a member for thirty-four years, a decision which the King much regretted, though he added: "I quite understand and appreciate the reasons."

Two other leading Liberal politicians, Mr. John Blair Balfour, who after long service in the House of Commons had become in 1899 Lord Justice General of Scotland, and Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, who had filled minor offices in several Liberal governments and had sat in the House of Commons for twenty-six years, were created Barons. Honours were about equally divided between the two parties, but the King's personal friends who were unconnected with politics figured prominently in the lists, as well as representatives of science, art, and literature. Nor did the King forget those who had faithfully served him when Prince of Wales. Within a few months of his accession he had made Sir Francis Knollys and Sir Maurice Holzman G.C.V.O.'s, and now in the Coronation list of honours Sir Dighton Probyn was created a G.C.B., Sir Nigel Kingscote, Sir Arthur Ellis, and Sir Stanley Clarke were made G.C.V.O.'s, and Sir Francis Knollys elevated to the peerage.

In spite, however, of the King's desire "to keep the list within the limits adopted at the time of the Diamond Jubilee," titular honours were more liberally distributed than on any previous occasion. Altogether, the number of peerages, baronetcies, privy councillorships, knighthoods, and decorations conferred in 1902 was 1540, a number that contrasts strikingly with the 515 conferred in 1911 and the 375 in 1913.[1]

This liberality was partly due to the creation of a new Order. In the middle of April 1902 the King had suggested the creation

[1] *The Times*, 23rd June 1914.

of the Order of Merit to reward distinguished achievement in the arts, sciences, and literature as well as in military and naval service.

"The Order," the King wrote to Lord Salisbury (April 20), "will have only one class, and no rank given for it. It will consist of a Red Cross worn round the neck, the only difference being that the Order conferred on officers of the Army and Navy will have two swords crossed, as was the case in the Hanoverian Order of the Guelph. For many years it has been my great wish that this 'Order of Merit' should be instituted so as to reward in a special manner officers of the Navy and Army, and Civilians distinguished in Arts, Sciences, and Literature. I have always been so much impressed by the Prussian Order 'Pour le Mérite' which was, I believe, instituted originally by Frederick the Great, that I have always wished that a similar one might be created for England. Your view that there should be a limited number is well worthy of consideration, and possibly twelve for the Army and Navy and twelve for Civilians would be the right number. I should wish it to be a decoration entirely vested in the Sovereign's hands, who would naturally consult the Prime Minister and the Ministers at the head of certain Departments."[1]

Lord Salisbury favoured the King's proposal but pointed out that many distinguished naval and military authorities at the Admiralty and the War Office stoutly objected to the inclusion of military or naval officers.

"The number of honours," he wrote to the King on 17th April, "which are now open to them is very large, far beyond all precedent. The peculiar class of merit which the new Order is intended to recognise will not, ordinarily, have any close relation to military service, and some confusion will probably result from an attempt to mix up with such claims the kind of distinction which the Order Pour le Mérite will confer."

But the King had his way, and the Order, when finally instituted by Letters Patent dated 23rd June 1902, was on the lines

[1] A suggestion for such an Order had been made by Lord Stanhope, the historian and founder of the National Portrait Gallery, some thirty years before. On 27th June 1873 he had moved in the House of Lords an address to the Crown requesting the institution of "an Order for men who deserve well of their country, and who have attained eminence in other walks of life than civil or military service." Lord Houghton supported the motion, but Lord Granville, who spoke slightingly of all decorations, opposed it and it was negatived. (Hansard, vol. ccxvi. pp. 1466 *seq.*)

which the King had proposed. The number of ordinary members was limited to twenty-four, but foreign honorary members might be admitted to any number at the discretion of the sovereign. Military and naval officers, who had rendered exceptionally meritorious service, were eligible together with persons who had distinguished themselves in art, literature, and science. There was an understanding with Lord Salisbury that appointments to the Order should, as in the case of the Royal Victorian Order, be made on the initiative of the sovereign and not on that of his advisers, but the sovereign might, of course, receive unofficial assistance from the Prime Minister in choosing members.

The first members of the order numbered twelve, and were included in the Coronation honours. The military members were Lord Roberts, Lord Wolseley, and Lord Kitchener; the naval members were Admirals Sir Harry Keppel and Sir Edward Seymour; science was represented by Lord Kelvin, Lord Lister, Lord Rayleigh, and Sir William Huggins; literature by Mr. John Morley and Mr. W. E. H. Lecky, and art by Mr. G. F. Watts.

The King rigorously kept the choice of members in his own hands, although he was willing to consider suggestions from the Prime Minister, but he was in no hurry to fill vacancies as they occurred. It was not until June 1905, after the death of three of the original members, that he made any fresh nominations.[1] Many names were then considered. Lord Salisbury's successor deemed it a fitting occasion to honour pure literature, but admitted that to make a selection was to skate on the thinnest ice. There was a special difficulty about Mr. Swinburne, and a lack of defined public opinion in the case of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Thomas Hardy, but finally the King's choice fell on Mr. George Meredith. Sir Richard Jebb, who was also selected at the time, was thought to be an appropriate choice as a classical scholar, although his claims to literary originality were not reckoned high when his name was first discussed. For art Sir L. Alma-Tadema and Mr. Holman Hunt were selected. The King, without consulting any one, placed Sir John Fisher's name on the list and also that of Sir George White, in spite of a warning which he received that

[1] Mr. Lecky died on 22nd October 1903, Admiral Keppel on 17th January 1904, and Mr. Watts on 1st July 1904.

while the latter was unexceptionable as far as courage and character went, he lacked great abilities, military or otherwise.[1]

In addition to the Order of Merit there were two other orders the distribution of which was entirely in the hands of the sovereign, viz., the Royal Victorian Order, founded in 1896 by Queen Victoria for the recognition of personal services to the sovereign or members of the royal family, and the Royal Victorian Chain, founded by King Edward in 1902, which, like the Order of Merit, was very rarely bestowed. To the Royal Victorian Order the King immediately on his accession made, on his exclusive authority, numerous additions from among his circle of personal friends But the Royal Victorian Chain was an honour, carrying no rank or precedence, which he intended to reserve as a personal decoration for royal personages and a few eminent British subjects. It was copied originally from the continent, where the Chain primarily existed as a sort of family decoration, eventually becoming the highest reward that could be given. The King now on the occasion of his Coronation personally conferred the Royal Victorian Chain on his brother, the Duke of Connaught, and his own son, the Prince of Wales, and on Frederick, Crown Prince of Denmark (afterwards King of Denmark), Prince Charles of Denmark (afterwards King Haakon VII. of Norway), Prince Henry of Prussia, Constantine, Duke of Sparta (afterwards King of the Hellenes), the Duke of Argyll, the Grand Duke of Hesse, Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, the Duke of Fife, and Dr. Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury. On 9th November he conferred the Chain on the Kaiser, and ten days later on Carlos I., the King of Portugal.[2]

[1] All these appointments were made on 30th June 1905. Subsequent appointments during the reign were Lord Cromer (June 1906), Miss Florence Nightingale (November 1907), Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace (November 1908), and Professor Henry Jackson (June 1908) The first foreign honorary members were made in February 1906: Marshal Oyama, Marshal Yamagata, and Admiral Togo.

Since King Edward's death the principle of admission has undergone some modification owing to the war. Three statesmen, Viscount Haldane, Lord Balfour, and Mr Lloyd George, have received the distinction. Foreign honorary members now include Marshals Foch and Joffre. At present (January 1, 1927) there are four military members, eleven civil members, and three honorary members.

[2] Lord Curzon of Kedleston and King Victor Emmanuel were admitted in 1903 Christian IX., King of Denmark; Frederick William, Crown Prince of Germany; and the Emperors of Austria and Russia were admitted in 1904. Alfonso XIII., King of Spain, Abbas Hilmi, Khedive of Egypt, George I.,

The profuse shower of honours not only on Britons but also on distinguished foreigners naturally brought its corresponding shower from foreign sovereigns. The conditions in which English subjects were permitted by the British government to accept honours from foreign states had been a matter of controversy for some three centuries. Queen Elizabeth was credited with the epigrammatic expression of disapproval that she "did not like her dogs to wear any collar but her own," though even she permitted her favourites to accept foreign decorations. A similar remark was attributed to King George III. to the effect that he "liked his sheep to be marked with his own mark," and through the early part of the nineteenth century the policy which deprecated foreign orders was rarely broken. On the occasion of the Paris Exhibition of 1855 a few Englishmen were allowed to receive the Legion of Honour, but the Emperor's similar offers of awards at the Paris Exhibition of 1867 were declined by the British Foreign Office. On 21st February 1873 Lord Houghton moved in the House of Lords the abrogation of existing restrictions, but the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, stoutly opposed the motion, cynically declaring that Lord Houghton's proposal would encourage Englishmen to intrigue at the great and small Courts for foreign decorations, many of which were not worth a "brass farthing," and Lord Houghton's motion was withdrawn.[1]

King Edward, however, took a far broader view and was very liberal in permitting the acceptance of foreign orders. In doing so he found himself at variance with his ministers. The question arose within a month of the King's accession, when the Kaiser expressed a wish to decorate all the officers and men who had been in attendance on him while he was in England on the occasion of Queen Victoria's death and funeral. The King approved, but Mr. Brodrick, the Secretary for War, raised strong opposition. The King had his way on this occasion, but the discussion was revived in May 1901, when Mr. Brodrick, with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, the Prime Minister, and Mr. Balfour, submitted a new regulation abrogating the old practice of permitting British military attachés to accept foreign decorations. The

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King of the Hellenes, and the Marquis of Lansdowne received the decoration in 1905; Prince Arthur of Connaught in 1906; and Gustavus V., King of Sweden, and M. Armand Fallières, President of the French Republic, in 1908.

[1] Hansard, vol. ccxiv. pp. 773 *seq.*

King thought (May 17) that "it would give great offence to the Sovereigns and States to whom these officers are accredited if a hard and fast rule is laid down on the subject." Mr. Brodrick argued that the certain expectation of foreign decorations on the part of military attachés encouraged them to curry favour with the foreign authorities and impaired the critical efficiency of their confidential dispatches—an opinion which brought the rejoinder from the King that in such cases the officers "would be unworthy of being considered gentlemen or men of honour, and the Secretary of State or Commander-in-Chief would be greatly to blame for recommending men capable of such conduct."

In September, however, Mr. Brodrick, who was attending the German manœuvres, himself accepted a German decoration, though he continued to protest against the principle at issue, urging that the multiplication of foreign orders disparaged British honours! The King went some way to meet his views and agreed to limit strictly the occasions on which foreign decorations should be worn (November 13, 1901), wishing them to be worn by officers "only on the occasions when they are to meet His Majesty, members of the Royal Family, or Foreign Royalties." There were good grounds for the ministerial protest, since the King's frequent visits abroad resulted in his suite being perhaps a little over-decorated. One member of the King's household, a great friend of the King, bore no less than twenty-three "blushing honours thick upon him."

III

All minds were now concentrated on the great event, the Coronation of the King, which had been fixed for 26th June. All seemed most auspicious when, in mid-June, like a mutter of thunder from a fair sky, the news flew from mouth to mouth that the King was ill. While on a visit to the camp at Aldershot he had attended a military tattoo on the evening of 14th June—a miserable day of rain and cold—and the next day he was in bed, having "contracted a chill." On the 16th he travelled from Aldershot to Windsor by road, Queen Alexandra reviewing in his place some 31,000 troops at Aldershot after his departure. The ensuing week he spent very quietly and was said to be better. The imminence of the Coronation increased the anxiety, but in

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spite of small improvement in his condition the King travelled on the 23rd from Windsor to London. Sir Frederick Treves advised that he should travel quietly by road, but the King insisted on keeping to the official programme and travelled by train to Paddington, passing thence to the Palace in procession with a cavalry escort. The public greeted him with boundless enthusiasm, though many noticed with dismay obvious signs of illness. That afternoon Lord Spencer in the Upper Chamber asked Lord Salisbury about the King's health. The House was full, and as Lord Spencer asked the question " everybody took off his hat, except dear old Lord Colville, aged 84, the Queen's Lord Chamberlain, who sat on the ' sacks ' looking a picture of sorrow." Lord Salisbury, speaking with a great deal of emotion, gave a gloomy account and was not reassuring.[1] The next morning, to the general consternation, the announcement was made that the Coronation was "indefinitely postponed," the King's medical advisers having diagnosed his disorder as acute appendicitis which required an immediate operation.

The public was dazed by the sudden disclosure. The rumour quickly spread that the King's recovery was highly doubtful, and certainly the surgeons and attendants feared the result of so delicate and hitherto infrequent an operation. The King himself viewed with dread the disappointment and inconvenience which a postponement of the Coronation would cause the public, and enjoined upon those about him the strictest secrecy as to his condition. He could not believe that an immediate operation was necessary, and it was not until Sir Frederick Treves and Sir Francis Laking convinced him almost against his will that it was his only hope of cure, and that he might die if he attempted to face the fatigue of the Abbey ceremony, that he was at last persuaded to consent to the postponement of the Coronation.[2] Even so, he commanded that the honours which were to be conferred should not be delayed by his illness, and up to the last moment persisted in pursuing the dignified ceremonies which were traditional on the eve of a Coronation.

The operation, which was performed by Sir Frederick Treves, was quite successful. Recovering consciousness after the anæsthetic, the King complained of the noise of hammering outside

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.
[2] Lord Redesdale's *King Edward VII.* p. 30.

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the Palace, and it was found that in spite of the public announcement of the postponement of the Coronation, no orders had been given countermanding the work on the stands which were being erected. The King had unsuspected reserve of strength, and within a few days he was convalescent, and by 5th July he was pronounced to be "out of danger." During his convalescence he was most anxious to conceal his weak state from the eyes of chance observers, and when he left London for Portsmouth on 15th July, prior to going for a sea-cruise, he gave minute directions for screening his passage to and from the train.

Throughout his illness, and indeed long after, the King gave many proofs of his gratitude to the surgeons, doctors, and nurses. Very soon after the operation he told Sir Frederick Treves that he would make him a baronet, explaining his early notification on the ground that he might yet die before his recovery was complete, in which event the conferment of honour might be overlooked or forgotten. The Irish nurse in charge, Miss Haines (from the London Hospital), remained with the King for two months, the King then displaying his gratitude by obtaining for her the post of Matron in the newly opened Officers' Home at Osborne House. A year later, when the King and Queen were visiting Ireland, the King further showed his appreciation of her services by inviting her parents to meet him at Mallow Station. When the royal couple reached Mallow the King presented Miss Haines's father (her mother being absent through illness) to the Queen, and said "very nice things" about the daughter, adding that he had recently seen her, and that he hoped she was happy in her new position.[1]

A few weeks later, when he and Queen Alexandra came down to open the out-patients department of the London Hospital on 11th June 1903, he very gracefully alluded to those who had helped him through the crisis:

> Before declaring this building open I wish to record my deep feeling of gratitude to this Hospital which, at the time of my severe illness, provided me with so distinguished a surgeon as Sir Frederick Treves, with an anæsthetist Dr. Hewitt, and with two such nurses as Nurse Haines and Nurse Tair, whose unceasing attention I cannot sufficiently praise. May God's blessing

[1] Private information from the Right Rev. G. F. Browne, late Bishop of Bristol.

rest on all who come to this Hospital for aid and on all who work for it.

King Edward's recovery from his illness proceeded rapidly and steadily amid the breezes of the Solent, and he was soon walking on deck in capital spirits. In the meantime, many letters of congratulation assured him of the joy of the nation at his recovery. Lord Rosebery recalled (July 7) "the relief and thanksgiving of thirty-one years ago when your Majesty was rescued from the very valley of the shadow," and similar expressions of satisfaction poured in from far and wide. The King naturally was no less pleased at the rapidity of his recuperation, and wrote to Lord Salisbury on 30th July: "I continue to make excellent progress towards recovery, and am now able to walk on deck." On 6th August, less than seven weeks after the operation, he returned to London to face with complete safety the fatigues of the great ceremony of the Coronation, and two days later he published an address of his own composition "To My People" which ran:

On the eve of my Coronation, an event which I look upon as one of the most solemn and important in my life, I am anxious to express to my people at home and in the Colonies, and in India, my heartfelt appreciation of the deep sympathy which they have manifested towards me during the time that my life was in such imminent danger.

The postponement of the ceremony owing to my illness caused, I fear, much inconvenience and trouble to those who intended to celebrate it; but their disappointment was borne by them with admirable patience and temper. The prayers of my people for my recovery were heard; and I now offer up my deepest gratitude to Divine Providence for having preserved my life and given me strength to fulfil the important duties which devolve on me as Sovereign of this great Empire.

EDWARD R. and I.

IV

The postponed Coronation took place on 9th August. The King was careful to obey medical advice as to the abbreviation of the long and fatiguing ritual of the ceremony, though he declined any dispensable arrangement which would suggest an invalid condition, and forbade the construction of a ramp or incline which

would save him the fatigue of mounting the steps at Westminster Abbey. In one spectacular respect there was a noticeable change. Most of the distinguished foreign guests had left London soon after the announcement of the King's illness, and only members of the minor reigning houses of Europe, who were lineally related to the King, were now present. The only Special Mission which remained was that from Abyssinia under Ras Makumen. The ceremony thus, as Lord Rosebery said at the time, assumed something of the character of a family festival. Certain it was that the enthusiasm of the crowds who lined the streets for the Coronation procession was in no way diminished by the unforeseen postponement.

The actual arrangements of the Coronation followed well-established precedent. But a new significance was given on the occasion to the symbolical significance of the British Crown by the prominence in the scene of representatives of all parts and races of the Empire. In this regard the precedent of the Diamond Jubilee of 1897 was improved upon. From the Dominions, Colonies, Dependencies, and Protectorates came representatives of the armed forces of the Crown. Every race which acknowledged allegiance to the British Empire was represented—Maoris from New Zealand, Dyaks from North Borneo, Chinese from Hong-Kong—from the four quarters of the world came contingents to prove the solidarity of the Empire. The most impressive of the native contingents came from India, whose members represented a vast array of races and creeds. Besides such official guests, tourists from America, Australia, India, South Africa, Canada, and Western Europe crowded the London streets.

At last the great day dawned. Shortly before eleven o'clock on the morning of 9th August 1902 the booming of cannon in Hyde Park proclaimed that King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra had started on their coronation journey from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey. The royal procession had already been preceded by those of the Prince of Wales and other royal personages, but that of the King and Queen was naturally longer and more brilliant. First came the sovereign's escort of Royal Horse Guards, followed by the King's Bargemaster and twelve watermen in their picturesque costumes. These were succeeded by the carriages and pairs conveying members of

the Royal Household, the personal staff of the Commander-in-Chief and others; followed by the A.D.C.'s to the King, among whom the Indian A.D.C.'s—the Maharaja of Cooch-Behar, the Maharaja Sir Pertab Singh of Idar, and the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior—attracted attention by the splendour of their Oriental dress. General Lord Kitchener, who closed this part of the procession, was quickly recognised and loudly cheered. Then came the Headquarters Staff of the Army with the Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, who also was warmly greeted. Next followed the Yeomen of the Guard and the King's Equerries. Then rode three Princes—Charles of Denmark, Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, and Albert of Schleswig-Holstein—followed by escorts of Colonial and Indian cavalry. At last came the famous eight cream-coloured horses, drawing the antique golden coach, through the crystal panels of which could be seen the King and Queen. All lingering doubts as to the health of the King were set at rest when he was seen looking radiant and well, acknowledging with the Queen the acclamations of his people. Popular enthusiasm knew no bounds, and a mighty roar of continuous cheering echoed from the Palace to Westminster. It seemed as if the pent-up anxiety of the nation had burst forth into a great shout of triumphant acclamation at the recovery of their King from what might well have proved a fatal illness. So great was the eagerness to see and to cheer the King that the rest of the procession was but lightly noticed. The Duke of Connaught, the King's brother, rode on the right of the state coach, and Prince Arthur of Connaught by the side of the Standard immediately behind it. At half-past eleven the historic carriage drew up to the West Door of the Abbey to the sound of a fanfare of trumpets and the music of the Abbey bells.

Within the Abbey all was hushed and expectant. Here were gathered the principal officers of State, the leaders of all branches of national activity, the flower of the peerage, and the *corps diplomatique*. After a short interval the Queen appeared, matchless and superb, accompanied by four Duchesses, and passed gracefully to her seat on the south of the sanctuary. A few moments afterwards the King followed in stately procession. He advanced slowly, with firm step and great dignity as though he had known no infirmity, inclining his head slightly to the right and to the left as he passed up the aisle. As

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he passed into the choir he was hailed, as the Queen had been hailed a few moments earlier, by the shouts of the Westminster schoolboys, who were gathered together in the triforium. The earlier cry of "Vivat Regina Alexandra," was now succeeded by "Vivat Rex Eduardus! Vivat Rex Eduardus! Vivat! Vivat! Vivat!"

The King was now conducted to the Chair of Recognition. His regalia were laid upon the Altar, and all was in readiness for the Coronation service. The aged Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Frederick Temple, began the service with the "Recognition." The King stood up by his chair as the Primate called out to those assembled: "Sirs, I here present unto you King Edward, the Undoubted King of this Realm: Wherefore, All you who are come this day to do your Homage, Are you willing to do the same?" The affirmative echoed from every part of the ancient fane: the silver trumpets again blared forth, and as the echoes died away there broke upon the stillness the soft words of prayer.

For an hour the stately and impressive service went on, although shortened by the omission of the Litany, the sermon, and some other features. The King's responses to the Coronation oath, which was administered by the Archbishop, were given in clear and sonorous tones. Finally, the great moment came. The King was enthroned in the Coronation chair, the Crown was brought down from the altar, and the Archbishop tremblingly placed it on the King's head. Now, indeed, was Edward VII. "By the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions Beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India."

A loud cry of homage came from all parts of the Abbey. "God save the King! God save the King!" The trumpets sounded again; the bells pealed out the glad news; the guns of the Tower added their booming note, and from every church in the land there burst forth the joyous peal of acclamation.

In the Abbey itself the service continued slowly to its end, and the ceremonious homage was paid to the newly crowned monarch. The venerable Archbishop came first and took the oath on behalf of the Church. He was weak and tired, and found great difficulty in rising. The King leant forward and, clasping with affectionate warmth the hands that had crowned him,

Sir Luke Fildes R.A. pinxit Emery Walker ph. sc.

King Edward VII

in Coronation Robes

1902

Reproduced by gracious permission of His Majesty the King

helped him to stand upright. Not even the tender kiss with which he greeted his son, the Prince of Wales, after he had done homage, could create greater emotion than this spontaneous tribute of respect to the octogenarian prelate, who, a few weeks later, valiantly attempted to make a speech in the House of Lords, broke down, and was taken home never to come forth again [1]

The Coronation of the Queen then followed. She was anointed by the Archbishop of York, Dr. Maclagan, who afterwards invested her with the Crown and other emblems of her dignity. At the moment the Queen was crowned the Peeresses put on their coronets. Their white gloved arms seemed to make a frame to every face, and the beautiful effect was remarked even in that day of striking scenes.

Two days later, among the many distinguished persons whom the King saw at Buckingham Palace was Lord Grenfell, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta, who had recently been made a peer, and from his *Memoirs* we have an indication of how the King himself regarded the trying ceremony.

"The King," he relates, "seemed very well and delighted at having got over the ceremony, he having received, he told me, telegrams and letters prophesying evil. He spoke in a very loud voice to me, which I could not quite understand: he then told me that he had been talking to Lord Augustus Loftus, who is stone deaf, half an hour before I had come in. The King said the only anxious moment he had was when he thought one of the Archbishops would collapse at his feet, and this made him slightly nervous during the service. He referred most kindly to my peerage and said he felt sure it would help me in my administration of Malta" [2]

Throughout the country Coronation Day was observed as a public holiday, and on the following day, Sunday, services of

[1] Lord Redesdale's *King Edward VII.* p 32. The Archbishop died four months later, on 22nd December 1902 Five days later the King wrote to the Bishop of Ripon:

"This has been a wonderful year for me—which is now rapidly approaching its close—and I cannot be sufficiently grateful for God's mercy in having preserved my life during my dangerous illness and enabled me to be the principal actor in that solemn and interesting ceremony this summer.

"The illustrious archbishop who performed so important a part on that occasion has just passed away. He was a great man, who will, I feel sure, be justly appreciated for his straightforward qualities and kindliness of heart! . ."

[2] Lord Grenfell's *Memoirs*, pp 167-8.

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thanksgiving in all places of worship celebrated not only the King's Coronation, but also his restoration to complete health and vigour.

V

During the days following the Coronation the King presided over a series of public functions which were designed to associate with the Coronation the main sources of Imperial strength. In the gardens of Buckingham Palace on 12th August an investiture and parade of some 1800 Colonial troops took place in the King's presence, and in an address he congratulated the men on their services in South Africa. A similar attention was paid the next day to the Indian contingent. But the King did not forget those who were serving in the home forces, and an imposing naval review was held at Spithead on the 16th. One hundred vessels of war were moored in four long lines, through which the King passed in his yacht. He expressed his gratification at the sight in a letter to Lady Londonderry (August 19):

The naval review on Saturday was a splendid sight. . . . The day was perfect, but it rained at night, though it did not interfere with the illuminations of the fleet, being electric. . . . To-morrow we have to receive and entertain the Shah at Portsmouth,[1] and after that we hope, weather permitting, to take a cruise in Scotland.

The ordeal of the Coronation had been no light tax on the King's health, and it was deemed advisable that he should take a cruise, which was now his favourite form of recreation. On 22nd August he left Cowes with the Queen, Princess Victoria, the Marquis de Soveral, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain as minister in attendance, for a cruise along the west coast of Scotland. They put in at Weymouth, Milford Haven, the Isle of Man, Arran, Colonsay, Ballachulish, Torloisk, Stornoway, and Dunrobin, before arriving at Invergordon on 8th September. It was "a most successful cruise . . . in perfect weather," as the King wrote to Sir Frank Lascelles on 28th August. "We much enjoyed our visit to the Isle of Man and the Isle of Arran.

[1] The Shah had arrived in England on the 17th. He was visiting the great capitals of Europe. The King, always anxious to meet foreign potentates, warmly welcomed him at Portsmouth on 20th August, and on his departure accompanied him to his train. See pp 155-7 *infra*

This evening we reached this quaint island (Colonsay), which belongs to and over which rules Sir John M'Neill ! "

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At the Isle of Man the royal party enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Hall Caine. The day was glorious, with a cloudless blue sky and brilliant sunshine. Never was a royal visit less formal or more friendly. Sir Hall Caine has left a pleasing picture of the royal party that day :

Just a gentleman in a lounge suit and two ladies wearing black sailor hats, driving in an ordinary hired landau, with a few friends and officials of the island in carriages and hackney cabs behind them, and three or four local journalists bicycling by their sides. . . .

I should have said that the King was a strong man that day. Looking at his sunburnt face, and listening to his full voice and hearty laughter (I told him some quaint Manx stories), I found it hard to realise that he had so lately recovered from a serious illness. In conversation he rarely said more than a dozen words at a time, yet this conveyed no sense of reticence but rather of an unbroken flow of talk, consisting chiefly of questions. The Queen, on the other hand, talked continuously, hardly ever waiting for a reply, but this may have been partly due to her deafness, which, though not then extreme, must have made it difficult for her to hear what others about her were saying. She was all nerves and emotions, but it was clear that she was struggling to control both in order to spare or not displease the King. Our insular authorities, in the excess of their loyalty, had ordered that numerous guns should be fired during the luncheon hour from some unseen place under the Castle walls, and seeing how much the explosions were distracting her I suggested that I should ask the Governor to stop the firing, but she would not permit me to do so. " No, no, please don't · the King would not like it," she said.

It was the King with her first and last always.[1]

En route from Ballachulish to Stornoway the King's yacht called at Torloisk, in Mull, where the King's friend Lord Knutsford and his family were holiday-making at Mr. Samuel Bevan's place. Lord Knutsford gives us his own account of the King's visit :

" I had," he relates, " teased the children a good deal by saying that as the King was yachting round the west coast of Scotland, recruiting after his operation, he was quite sure to

[1] Sir Hall Caine in the *Sunday Times*, 22nd November 1925.

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come and call upon us. They could not quite make out whether I was in earnest; and certainly I was not, for it was the last thing I expected, though I knew that the Queen knew where we were. However, early one morning I was awakened by 'Father, father, there are two big ships in the bay.' I jumped up and dressed as quickly as I could, and behold, the King's yacht and a man-of-war were in the bay, and a boat coming off. Bertie Brand (now Admiral Sir Hubert Brand), a nephew of Sam Bevan, was in the boat and came up to the house and said that the King wished me to come down to the yacht and take him seal-stalking, which he heard I was enjoying. I sent for my keeper and went off at once. The King and Queen were very kind to me. He talked a great deal about his operation and told me of the intense pain he suffered before he could make up his mind to go through with it. The Queen told me how the Saturday before his operation he had sent for Dr. Laking. Laking at once suspected that there was a good deal of mischief somewhere and told the King that he must see Sir Frederick Treves at once. The King refused to do this, whereupon Laking sat down and said that he was the King's medical adviser and refused to leave the room until the King promised to see Treves. This action of Laking's and his brave insistence probably saved the King's life, as the appendix abscess was a very bad one.

"The King talked a good deal about the success of his Hospital Fund and of the bitter disappointment it was to him to have to put off the Coronation. He thanked me very sincerely for having sent Nurse Haines to him. He was very pleased with her, and she was on board the yacht. The other people on board the yacht were the Marquis de Soveral, Austen Chamberlain, Miss Knollys, and Princess Victoria. The weather by this time had got rather rough and the doctor on board considered that it was too rough for the King to go off in a little boat to get a seal, and so Hedworth Lambton (now Admiral Sir Hedworth Meux), who was the Admiral in command of the yacht, decided to send me ashore in a boat, but, bless him! he landed me miles away from Torloisk, and I had to walk home! It was a kindly thought of the King to give £1 to my stalker, who had it framed with the inscription, 'Given me by my King.'"[1]

The itinerary included a visit to Stornoway, the capital of Lewis, which had never previously been visited by a British sovereign. The King's host here was Mr. Joseph Platts, who sent to the King's yacht a gift of sea-trout and venison—a gift which brought forth from the King some pointed remarks. Among Mr.

[1] Viscount Knutsford, *In Black and White*, pp. 304-5.

Platts' guests was Sir Felix Semon, one of the King's physicians, whom the King invited to lunch. Referring to the venison, the King asked Semon who had killed the stag. Semon answered, "Miss Florence Thorneycroft, the sister of your Majesty's famous general." "What!" said the King, frowning "A woman? I do not like at all the 'Dianes chasseresses'! Women have better things to do than to kill animals. I will not refuse the gift, because *you* brought it, but I do not approve of shooting by ladies!"

After saying that he felt much better, but was still easily tired, and would for some length of time have to live very quietly, the King became very pensive, and said he still keenly felt the disappointment he had caused, through his illness, to so many people on the eve of his coronation. The thought evidently much depressed him, though Semon cheered him up by pointing out the loyal reception he had had everywhere on his trip.

Wherever the royal yacht called there were enthusiastic manifestations of loyalty. There was neither check nor pause in the popular rejoicings. Undoubtedly the nation's sympathy had gone out to the King in the illness and convalescence which he had borne so patiently and so cheerfully

The cruise was followed by a stay at Balmoral, whence the King wrote to Lady Londonderry: "I can give you the best possible account of myself. Our cruise did me great lots of good, and I am now benefiting by the bracing air of the Highlands, and having good sport with the deer." He went on to add, with a touch indicative of his sociability. "We have had relays of generals here and other people for a few days, which makes the time pass very pleasantly."

The King was astoundingly vigorous, and moved about for hours with the greatest elasticity and perseverance during the frequent deer-drives, and even ascended steep and slippery hills. At last he indulged in such severe mountain-climbing and looked so hot that his physicians vetoed such exertions. In comic despair the King exclaimed: "I really never can please you! First you torment me with your eternal warnings, that I ought to take exercise, and now, when I do it, you scold me because I am overdoing it!" [1]

[1] Sir Felix Semon's Diary

CHAPTER VI

THE KING AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 1901–1902

I

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ALTHOUGH the new King appeared as the recognised head of society and its *arbiter elegantiarum*, social matters by no means occupied an excessive part of his time, and it was to foreign affairs that he from the first mainly directed his attention. The foreign policy of the country had been his eager study for some forty years. Long before his accession he had talked over its details or corresponded about them with British ministers and foreign ambassadors in England, or with foreign rulers and statesmen, with an ever-growing zest. His protracted struggle with his mother over his desire that the Foreign Office should transmit their dispatches to him had ended in his favour, and of late he had exchanged letters on foreign questions with the Kaiser, the Tsar, and the King of Greece. Ample material for estimating the character and aims of foreign Powers was at his disposal, and his accumulation of knowledge enabled him to offer invaluable suggestions on the course of foreign policy. His habit of correspondence and of personal discussion on foreign affairs continued throughout his reign, and he was prolific in independent comment and warning to his ministers whenever foreign policy was in question.

It was the constitutional function of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary especially to advise him as to his attitude towards every foreign question as it arose, but King Edward's lifelong study of foreign affairs, and his ripened intimacy with the chief personal factors in continental politics, did not allow him to restrict his sources of foreign information to his ministerial counsellors, or to echo with automatic docility their opinions.

Not seldom he changed places with his constitutional advisers and offered advice instead of receiving it. He was constitutionally in no position to ensure its acceptance by his ministers, but there was nothing to prevent his so-called servants from adopting his counsel when they saw fit and of tendering it back to him as a ministerial pronouncement. In such a way did King Edward advise his advisers. Such a process was frequently at work without prejudice to constitutional principle. There was thus a certain justification for the popular belief that Britain's foreign policy during the reign was influenced by the sovereign's predilections.

The King required his foreign and war ministers to keep him informed of every detail in their management of affairs. He was constantly calling their attention to matters which they seemed to him to have overlooked or the significance of which they seemed to have underestimated. He was generous in congratulation when their measures met with any conspicuous success, but he was inclined to rebuke them for failure. While, however, he was privately voluble in criticism of his ministers' actions, he severely discouraged public criticism of them by others, and heated censure by political opponents often evoked a reproof. He attached little weight to party recriminations and did not conceal his dislike of them. His invariable aim was to promote peace and goodwill, provided that British interests were duly respected. He always recognised that in certain eventualities war might be inevitable, and, foreseeing the horrors of a European conflict to be carried on with the latest machinery of destruction, he pursued with energy every means of establishing peace short of surrender to humiliating counsels of fear.

The main historic importance of King Edward's reign is the abandonment of the time-worn policy of isolation in foreign affairs, and the substitution for it of a system of ententes and alliances. The effect of Britain's changed foreign policy on her own fortunes and on those of the world requires, in view of the events which followed King Edward's death, very cautious and discriminating handling. Nothing that took place after his reign directly belongs to the theme of this biography, and, however historically momentous, forms no more than the epilogue of the biographic story. On the other hand, the degree of King Edward's

responsibility for the re-entry of Britain, after long withdrawal, into a developing partnership with France and Russia, calls for minute examination and precise definition.

II

The disposition of the Great Powers of Europe at the beginning of King Edward's reign was mainly conditioned by the two sets of alliances, the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy, and the Dual Alliance of Russia and France. A favourable interpretation viewed the two alliances as counterpoises one to the other, making for a stable European equilibrium. These opposing armed camps were kept apart in chronic antagonism by two age-long quarrels which were the causes of past and future wars. France could never forgive Germany for the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine, while Russia and Austria were striving doggedly for hegemony of the Near East. But there was always a chance, though a remote one, that jealousy of Britain, from which no great European Power could be reckoned quite free, might be so stimulated by circumstance as to bring the members of the two alliances together in a combined challenge to Britain's place in the world. Britain was thus isolated, friendless, and engaged in a none too successful or popular war when King Edward ascended the throne. The sympathy of foreign peoples with the cause of the Boer enemy continued to manifest itself in rancorous denunciation of the British name in all the market-places of Europe. Foreign governments in their intercourse with the British government diplomatically qualified the notes of popular hostility, but doubts were justified whether the correct tone of the Chancelleries of Europe implied any genuine goodwill. One thing alone was certain, that England was isolated and friendless. Lord Salisbury, King Edward's first Prime Minister, had long been wedded to that policy of "splendid isolation" which had been the constant British tradition through the last forty-five years of Queen Victoria's long reign. Persistence in that policy offered little opportunity of improving the foreign situation as it existed in 1901, and might actually have exposed Britain to the risk of a hostile combination on a wellnigh overwhelming scale. The alternative foreign policy of alliances with other Powers had its obvious dangers of entanglement in continental quarrels and

misunderstandings, in which Britain might have no direct interest, but formal diplomatic understandings with other Powers seemed to offer the solvent of the perils of Britain's stubborn aloofness.

Even before King Edward came to the throne several prominent British statesmen had begun to urge the abandonment of our splendid if somewhat risky isolation, and by the more acute minds our natural allies were thought to be Germany and America. In November 1899 Mr. Chamberlain, in a speech at Leicester, had formulated the idea.

"No far-seeing statesmen," he said, "could be content with England's permanent isolation on the continent of Europe. . . . The natural alliance is between ourselves and the German Empire. . . . Both interest and racial sentiment united the two peoples, and a new Triple Alliance between Germany, England, and the United States would correspond with the sentimental tie that already bound Teutons and Anglo-Saxons together."

For two years Mr Chamberlain worked steadily towards this end, in spite of the apathy of Lord Salisbury, and in face of the obvious difficulty on the part of Germany of securing the new alliance without losing the older one with Austria and Italy. Germany's plan was to add Britain to the Triple Alliance, thus forming a Quadruple Alliance that would prove more than a counterpoise to the Dual Alliance of France and Russia.

In spite of set-backs and annoyances the idea of an Anglo-German understanding appeared to prosper, and was aided not a little by one of those illusory seasons of outward harmony between King Edward and the Kaiser. Between King Edward and his nephew there had been for many years temperamental crises which alternated with periods of goodwill and endeavours to secure more cordial relations. In some ways the characters of the two monarchs greatly resembled one another. Both had a remarkable power of perception; both of them could be extraordinarily genial and could combine graciousness with charm. Neither of them could be reckoned as well read, for neither had acquired the habit of deep reading; but both of them had vast stores of information that had been rapidly picked up in conversation, or from the perusal of diplomatic and other official documents. Both had that supreme gift of quickly grasping the inward aspect of many things. Yet here the likeness finished. The Kaiser's charm of manner was

used deliberately; King Edward's was natural. The Kaiser was changeable, vainglorious, impulsive, and erratic; the King was steadfast and indefatigable, kindly at heart and intensely human.

Not a little of the difference between the two monarchs was caused by the undoubted patriotism of each. The Kaiser with all his faults could never be accused, prior to the Great War, of being anything but a pro-German in the finest sense of the term, while King Edward was undoubtedly proud of his position as the head of the British Empire. As the ruler of the greatest military state of Europe, as a monarch who had had thirteen years' experience of royal power before King Edward ascended the throne, the Kaiser held that he was much more important and more to be considered than his uncle. King Edward for his part, as the sovereign of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen, and as the uncle and senior in years of the Kaiser, resented the German Emperor's affectation of superiority. That tension, however, temporarily disappeared when reinforced domestic sentiment stirred in the Kaiser after Queen Victoria's death, together with a fresh hope that the British government might accept his idea of a Quadruple Alliance in which Britain would serve Germany as an auxiliary. He had long credited his uncle with a potent influence in political affairs, and his conception of its strength inevitably grew now that the Prince of Wales was King. England's isolated position in Europe rendered the Kaiser's advances, whatever doubts might be harboured of their motive or sincerity, by no means uncongenial to King Edward or to his ministers.

III

On 25th February 1901 the King left England, for the first time since his accession, to pay a private visit to his eldest sister the Empress Frederick, who was slowly dying of cancer at her residence Friedrichshof, near Cronberg. He travelled without any retinue save Captain Frederick Ponsonby, his Assistant Private Secretary, and Sir Francis Laking, his Physician-in-Ordinary. He had long been accustomed to go abroad without special notice, but this time the news of his visit travelled ahead of him. At Flushing the unwelcome sounds of the Boer national hymn grated on his ears, and this defiant discourtesy was repeated at other of the

Dutch stations on the way. At Homburg the King was met by the Kaiser, who was in an affable mood and made every protestation of friendship, and by Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador to Berlin. The meeting between the two sovereigns was outwardly cordial, but below the surface there lurked a difference that was soon to cause difficulty.

Before leaving Germany on 3rd March, the King in his last interview with Sir Frank Lascelles at Frankfurt had bidden the Ambassador to invite the Kaiser, " in the event of any divergence arising between the two governments," to write to him direct, when he would do his best " to smooth matters down."

" The Emperor," wrote Lascelles on 13th April, " received this message with evident pleasure and gave Sir Frank to understand that he would promptly take advantage of the suggestion Your Majesty had made. It is therefore possible that the Emperor will himself communicate to Your Majesty some of the severe criticism on Your Majesty's Government which Sir Frank has referred to in his official correspondence with Lord Lansdowne."

A few days earlier the Kaiser in a conversation with Sir Frank Lascelles had made manifest his irritation with England's lack of co-operation with Germany in China by referring to the King's ministers as " unmitigated noodles." The King naturally resented such disrespectful language about his own advisers and sent for Baron Eckardstein, the Secretary of the German Embassy (April 14), whose report of the interview runs :

I found him sitting in his study with two papers before him. The one was a letter from the Kaiser and the other a long despatch from Sir Frank Lascelles. He received me by saying, in a tone that was only half-jest, " Well, whatever have you been about now ? " He then read me some passages from the Ambassador's dispatch, and after that a great part of the Kaiser's letter. . . . He commented on the Kaiser's assurances of friendship for England with a sarcastic " I hope that is so." And when he came to where the Kaiser referred to British Ministers as " unmitigated noodles " he laid the letter down on the table and said to me, " There, what do you think of that ? "

After thinking a bit, I said, " Wouldn't it be best if Your Majesty treated the whole as a joke ? " He laughed at that and replied : " Yes, you are quite right. I must treat the thing as

a joke. But unluckily I have already had to put up with many of these jokes of the Kaiser's, and even worse than this one too, and I suppose I shall have to put up with many more." Then he went on: "Whatever would the Kaiser say if I allowed myself to call his Ministers such nice names! As you know I have for years had the greatest sympathy for Germany, and I am still to-day of opinion that Great Britain and Germany are natural allies. Together they could police the world and secure a lasting peace. Of course Germany wants colonies and commercial developments. And it can, after all, have as much as it wants of both. There is room in the world for both Great Britain and Germany. Only we can't keep pace with these perpetual vagaries of the Kaiser. Moreover, as you know, some of my Ministers have the greatest distrust for the Kaiser and Bülow, especially Lord Salisbury. I have always tried to dissipate this distrust, but after all one can't go on for ever. And the abuse and threats that the German 'Flottenverein' and its organs are perpetually pouring on us are not exactly calculated to get rid of this distrust."

Throughout the conversation the King was more irritated than I had ever seen him before. . . .

I had already heard from Holstein that the Kaiser had used the expression "unmitigated noodles" quite generally during the conversation with the Ambassador. Sir Frank appears not to have mentioned it in his dispatch at all, presumably so as not to make unnecessary trouble in London: and so of course the Kaiser must go and put it into his private letter to the King.[1]

Attempts were made to smooth over the trouble. Holstein, the head of the political department of the German Foreign Office, scenting trouble, had previously informed Eckardstein on 10th April that the Kaiser was referring generally to persons who gave credence to unjustifiable suspicions, and King Edward appeared to accept the explanation. His annoyance at the Kaiser's outburst did not last long, but it checked his optimistic hopes of reaching a cordial agreement with Germany. None the less, during the first year of the new reign neither the Kaiser's instability of will and temper nor the international jealousies which chauvinist sections of the two peoples kept alive were obtrusive enough to discount sanguine prospects of a general friendly co-operation between the two sovereigns and their governments, and King Edward did all that he could to further the pacific design.

[1] Baron von Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James's*, pp. 216-17.

On the 14th June 1901 the King gave Count Hatzfeldt,[1] the German Ambassador, a private audience, in which the affairs of the two countries came under review The King hoped Hatzfeldt would be able to come to a good understanding with Lord Lansdowne, who "was very well inclined and deserved all praise." When Hatzfeldt expressed the opinion that Lord Lansdowne, the newly appointed Foreign Secretary, would do his best to establish good relations with Germany, but that he was not at all sure whether he would find support and understanding appreciation from Lord Salisbury, the King, as Hatzfeldt related, answered, with a glance of tacit agreement, that this was unfortunately true, and that the Prime Minister was exceptionally suspicious: which was perhaps partly explained by his age.

Then the King began to speak of Russia and displayed evidence of great mistrust in all references to that power. . . . The King obviously proceeded from the presupposition that Russia is not satisfied even with Manchuria in the Chinese question, and that we must be prepared for several far-reaching demands of

[1] Towards the end of 1899 the ill-health of the pacific Count Hatzfeldt, who had been German Ambassador in London since 1885, had somewhat impeded diplomatic negotiations between the two countries Much authority passed to Baron von Eckardstein, the Secretary of the Embassy, who was on the most intimate terms with both the Prince of Wales, as King Edward then was, and the Kaiser, and did all he could to reconcile their divergent interests, yet delays and uncertainties were inevitable in current business With a view to easing the formal relations, the Kaiser, in February 1900, when Count Hatzfeldt had taken a three months' leave on account of illness, sent over to London, as temporary chargé d'affaires, his intimate friend, Count Paul Wolff Metternich, who had already served a turn as secretary there. The King, then Prince of Wales, received the Count with the utmost cordiality. As the Kaiser wrote to his uncle on 23rd February:

"By a most interesting dispatch from Count Metternich which I have just received, I was able to judge of his reception in London, and especially and before all by you. I therefore hasten to thank you most heartily for the cordiality and open frankness with which you so kindly received him, as well as for your last kind letter. He is deeply grateful to you for thus showing him your confidence, and can hardly find words to express his feelings You have confided in no ordinary man. He is by conviction a staunch friend of England, and that was why I chose him for London, but he is at the same time a trusted and true friend of mine, enjoying my fullest confidence, who will I am sure always faithfully repeat all you honour him by telling him for me the same as he will in all I have to let him know He will do all in his power to tighten the relations between our two countries and to smooth over and alleviate frictions and roughness that will turn up, as much as he can, and in this work he will, I am sure, find his best and strongest support in you. . ."

Although it was doubtless the Kaiser's intention that Count Metternich should remain as Count Hatzfeldt's successor, Count Hatzfeldt returned in the spring to his duties, and Count Metternich withdrew temporarily to Berlin.

this power in China, demands which will not be acceptable for England. Without going any further into this, I reminded the King that after long and not always easy negotiations with Lord Salisbury, I had concluded an agreement concerning China which had established the basis for a satisfactory mutual understanding on the parts of Germany and England. . . . His Majesty passed from this to speak of Field-Marshal Count von Waldersee (who had been appointed to command the European forces in China), in the course of which he remarked with a certain emphasis, that between the Count and the English Commander-in-Chief there existed the best of relations, while Count von Waldersee had no doubt not always found the same serene situation in his relations with the other commanders.

In conclusion the King mentioned with a certain hesitation the visit of French officers to Berlin and the particularly friendly reception given to them there. Although he did not say it openly, I had yet the impression that the King had a certain apprehension, or that the thought had been given him from another part, that German policy was occupying itself with the concealed thought of a possible political approach, undesirable by England, towards France.

Here our political conversation was interrupted by the entry of the Queen.[1]

Two months later Count von Waldersee returned to Germany from Pekin. A fanatical Anglophobe, he rapidly acquired an influence over the Kaiser and urged him to take umbrage at the British government's refusal to accept the German proposal to double the Chinese customs so that their receipts might give better security for the payment of the suggested indemnity. Consequently the Kaiser expressed immense indignation at the British government's action, nor did his wrath abate when Britain declined to co-operate with Germany in a very strong protest to Russia against Russia's encroachments on Chinese territory.

In spite of the continued efforts, the fair promise of an Anglo-German understanding soon proved delusive. The King's conciliatory tones could not stem the oncoming tide of international rancour, and a belated endeavour on his part to alleviate the tension had merely temporary effect. The Kaiser's personal attitude to his uncle acquired features even more sinister than of old, and his extravagant vanity and the growing strain of German rivalry with Britain in all the fields of

[1] Hatzfeldt's report to Count von Bulow, *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. pp. 88-90.

empire tended to a mutual alienation which no individual conciliatory effort could assuage. Matters were becoming complicated. Great Britain wished for an alliance with Germany, but would not be drawn into the Triple Alliance. Germany wanted to form a Quadruple Alliance, to which France might eventually be attracted to form a counterpoise to a possible Russo-American understanding. But the Kaiser was now thinking of reaching an understanding with Russia, and it was suggested that the projected Bagdad railway should be transformed into a German-Franco-Russian enterprise, to the exclusion of England. A Russo-German conflict would thus become impossible. There was not a Great Power in Europe that really had a definite policy. It was a period of tentative suggestions, of feelers, of diplomatic pourparlers. England particularly was rudderless and drifting, but was resolved to make one last effort to secure an Anglo-German alliance ; and the occasion favourable to the effort was deemed to be a personal meeting between King Edward and the Kaiser. If these two were in agreement, then ministers would follow.

By the middle of June even Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had lost hope of concluding an Anglo-German agreement, owing to the inexplicable attitude of Germany, but in July a final opportunity for a *rapprochement* was presented by the Moroccan mission to London to congratulate the King on his accession. French designs on Morocco were becoming apparent ; she wanted a French protectorate, and even Lord Lansdowne was in favour of co-operation with Germany to preserve the *status quo*. The way, he thought, might be prepared by an Anglo-German agreement with Morocco, after a mutual agreement as to the distribution of concessions. Eckardstein reported Lansdowne's offer to Berlin, but no response was forthcoming. Finally, in August, it was arranged that the King and Kaiser should meet to discuss the situation.

IV

An event now occurred which for the time being set political animosities at rest. The King's eldest sister, the Empress Frederick of Germany, the Kaiser's mother, died on 5th August at her Palace at Cronberg. The end came more

quickly than had been expected. On 24th July the Kaiser had written to the King of a visit he had paid his mother on the 15th, when he found her very despondent but able to write letters and to interest herself "in everything that is going on in the world, politics as well as literature and art." Her son thought her to be no worse than when the King last saw her, and anticipated no crisis till the winter. On 4th August the King wrote from Cowes to Lady Londonderry: "We have received very bad news of my poor dear sister, it may necessitate our leaving here to-morrow." The news of the Empress's death was received the following evening. "My beloved and gifted sister is a terrible loss for me," the King wrote to Lady Londonderry the next day, "but her sufferings were so great that one could not have wished her life prolonged. She has now at last the rest and peace she wished." The King and Queen immediately returned to London, but did not leave for Cronberg until the evening of the 9th. It was officially stated that their movements could not be decided until definite arrangements for the funeral had been announced.

The Kaiser, who had been yachting off Norway, had arrived post-haste at Cronberg from Bergen shortly before his uncle, and when they first met was inclined to reproach him for delay. Good relations were, however, soon restored, and the King was in the society of his nephew for several days, the Kaiser being in great spirits and quite affectionate in his manner. Sir Frank Lascelles joined the King and was present at a political conversation between him and the Kaiser in which the Kaiser made some bantering reference to the Anglo-Japanese agreement, which was still a secret. No knowledge of it had yet reached Lascelles, and for the moment the King failed to remember that Lord Lansdowne had submitted to him such a proposal, which in its original shape presumed Germany's participation. Inquiry was at once made as to how the news had leaked out to the Kaiser. Events proved that the Kaiser's informant was Baron von Eckardstein, who had previously suggested a combination of Japan, England, and Germany, and had kept the Kaiser informed of the negotiations after Germany had shown unwillingness to join in it.

Meanwhile, the first part of the funeral ceremony took place at Homburg, and the burial followed at Potsdam, where the Empress, by her own direction, was laid to rest beside her late husband in the mausoleum of the Friedenskirche on 13th August.

At both Homburg and Potsdam there were, to the King's irritation, imposing military displays. Fifteen thousand men lined the streets on the way to the Castle, and subsequently the Kaiser insisted, on the arrival of himself and his guest at the Castle, that the troops should march past them. The undue stress on Germany's military efficiency at such a time did not improve the King's opinion of the Kaiser

V

A week later, on 23rd August, the King, accompanied by Sir Frank Lascelles, went from Homburg, where he had been taking the cure, to visit the Kaiser at Wilhelmshöhe. This was to be the great occasion for the preliminary discussion of Anglo-German differences and for the creation of an Anglo-German understanding.

Extraordinary diplomatic preparations had been made for the meeting. On 2nd August von Muhlberg had reported to the Chancellor, Count von Bülow:

From the remark of Sir Frank Lascelles that the Kaiser is aware of and greatly interested in the idea of an Anglo-German alliance, it can be said with certainty that this question will soon be discussed at Homburg between H.M. and the representatives of England—the King and the Ambassador. These discussions build the indispensable basis for the work of the Foreign Office. In order that we can judge what under the given conditions is possible and attainable for us, we must, at least in broad outline, have some definite point of view during these Homburg discussions As one must not in politics leave even the unexpected out of account, we have the possibility of taking into consideration the fact that those Homburg conversations, through their reaction, may indirectly occasion a momentary mitigation of the Anglo-Russian contrasts. In order to work against this Anglo-Russian approach, there is apparently for the moment only one method: that the change (proposed by Doctor Siemens) of the Bagdad project from a German to a German-French-Russian undertaking should be formally approved by the Kaiser's government and in that way an official demonstration on our part in St. Petersburg should be arranged. By this means the principal cause of political conflict between us and Russia would be removed.

For the success of the conduct of German policy, however, it will be necessary that His Majesty the Kaiser should not only

accept this point of view, but that he should adopt this policy to the extent that during the Homburg meeting he should at no moment deviate from the conviction that we ruin our relations with England whenever it is known in England that we have quarrelled with Russia and France.[1]

The Chancellor now wrote (August 13) to the Kaiser stressing the official German point of view. The Kaiser in reply (August 20) seemed to be thinking more of giving England an unwelcome surprise than of reaching an amicable understanding with her.

" Furthermore," he wrote, " the building of our fleet must be expedited as quickly as possible. Who will get a nice surprise are the English, and perhaps it is also aimed at them. I have, by the way, in an answer to King Edward which I sent to him this morning hinted superficially at the news as a thing known for a long time. I am anxious for a sight of the King and Lascelles who are to dine with me on Friday." [2]

The King for his part was no less well primed. Lord Lansdowne had drawn up on 10th August for the particular use of the King a memorandum on questions which might be referred to in the interview. Lansdowne thought the main points to be dealt with were the negotiations respecting affairs in China, South Africa, Koweit, and Morocco.[3] In China the attitude of the British government was to prevent any " backstairs " transactions which might enable the Chinese government to avoid payment of the indemnity through the transference of territory; whilst in Morocco its policy was the maintenance of the *status quo*. Further, it was desired to treat Koweit as a special sphere of British influence.

The Lansdowne memorandum had been meant solely for the use of the King, but under a serious misapprehension the King handed it to the Kaiser on his previous meeting with him and the Kaiserin at Homburg on 11th August. Lord Lansdowne was extremely annoyed at this accident, and subsequently explained to Count Metternich that his Promemoria, which he had prepared in great hurry immediately before the King's departure, was never written for the Kaiser to see, and ought to have served only for the personal orientation of the King.[4] The

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. pp. 92-3. [2] *Ibid.* vol. xvii. p. 93.

[3] For actual wording see Appendix I.

[4] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. p. 94, note.

Kaiser at once had it copied and sent on to the Wilhelmstrasse, and ordered a counter-memorandum to be prepared which he might send on to the King. By the 18th the counter-memorandum was ready. The most elaborate precautions were taken to prevent its contents from coming to the notice of the British government before the King received it. Two copies were sent to Metternich on 20th August with instructions to keep one

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> for the archives of the Royal Embassy; the second copy you will transmit to the Foreign Office, after you have received communication from here that the meeting of H M. the Kaiser with King Edward has taken place.[1]

The counter-memorandum was sent to the King by the Kaiser on 21st August. The King at once forwarded it to Sir Frank Lascelles, to whom he wrote:

> I have this morning received from the German Emperor the enclosed memorandum which is in answer to the one Lord Lansdowne sent you for me to pass him a week ago, and which is now in the Emperor's possession.
>
> You will, I am sure, read it with considerable interest. If you wish to see me on the subject please call on me at 9.45 to-morrow morning and we can then discuss the advisability of it being sent to the Foreign Office.

In this counter-memorandum it was stated that Germany desired to be conciliatory in China, and was prepared to act with Great Britain, the United States of America, and Japan in future negotiations. In Koweit the German government had no desire to claim any sovereign or suzerain rights or privileges over territory. So far so good! But in Morocco, the German government, instead of definitely agreeing to the maintenance of the *status quo*, announced that they would follow "a policy of reserve."

Everything was now in readiness for the meeting of the two sovereigns. The Kaiser was perhaps the better informed of the two, and had additional secret information about the projected visit of the Tsar to France, which he had made up his mind to represent as a move against England. Count von Bülow suggested to him on the eve of the interview that he should

[1] *Die Grosse Politik,* vol. xvii. pp. 126-9. For actual wording of memorandum see Appendix I.

mention it to the King of England and to Sir Frank Lascelles as a thing the basis of which your Majesty knew all about but could not at present say anything concerning it.[1]

The next day the two monarchs met, Sir Frank Lascelles also being present. By way of easing matters at luncheon, the Kaiser, who was in great spirits, presented to the King a beautiful epergne of his own design which graced the table. After luncheon the two monarchs and Lascelles retired to the garden, where the Kaiser, in merry mood, chaffed Lascelles about his lack of knowledge of current events. The Kaiser's own account of the interview runs:

> The political interview which was held here to-day at my residence with the King of England and his Ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles, was opened by King Edward's query as to what was the real object of Tsar Nicholas' visit to France. That the Tsar wished to visit me at Danzig he had known for a long time, but that he was going immediately to France was quite a surprise to him. The King seemed seriously displeased with Tsar Nicholas' proceeding. If he had the desire to visit anyone besides myself, he ought to have come to him, his nearest relation. Did I know whether the Tsar was travelling with a suite?
>
> I replied that I did not know. The one thing I did know was that the Tsar had expressed an urgent desire to see Count Bülow. What was his object for this I could not explain, but it seemed very probable that he wished to discuss political questions. What he would propose was naturally beyond my knowledge.
>
> The King burst forth to give vent to his displeasure concerning the Tsar's visit to France; he thought that the Russians had no consideration, and the whole affair looked like a demonstration against England.
>
> I had certainly to acknowledge that the Russian visit to the manœuvres of the French fleet could be regarded in this way. But England could remain indifferent with her two squadrons at her coast and the strongest fleet in the world.
>
> Yes, replied the King, that is quite true, but all the same it is unpleasant.
>
> It was then he remarked that the Russians probably would take back from France with them some money. But what will they do with the money? asked the King. I rejoined that, as I had reason to believe, the Russians needed money for the building of the trans-Siberian railway. That this railway in its

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xviii. p. 19.

present position would not be used for commerce, but would serve only for military purposes, was quite clear. The Russians will send troops from West to East, I interjected; but whether against Manchuria, or Corea or Japan, that is yet to be shown. *A propos* Japan! If I rightly remember, in the winter of this year the Japanese ambassador put a question to my government as to what would be the attitude of England in the event of a Russo-Japanese conflict We answered him on that occasion that we believed that England would probably maintain a benevolent neutrality. On this question I saw Lord Lansdowne, who told me personally: "What! Neutrality! No, the British warships will fight together with Japan, and we must absolutely go with them!" The summer came and went, the Japanese war scare disappeared, and nothing happened. Later on the solution of this riddle came to me—from a Russian source! The Russians told us Japan wished to start a war; she asked money from England and this money was *refused* to them.

King Edward made here a remark of impetuous displeasure at the politics of the English cabinet and protested that he positively knew nothing of it. Also Sir Frank protested energetically and said that even at the risk of being indiscreet he had to assert that on the contrary the Japanese rejected English money. To my expressed doubt the Ambassador came out with a speech in which he said that of course England had offered the money, but had proposed such conditions that it was difficult for the Japanese to accept it.

I replied that it came to the same thing whether a thing was refused outright or whether such conditions were put that the other side could not accept it. The English government after such an action could not wonder if the phrase "perfidious Albion" were still accepted as before. I could call such politics only by the name of "Treachery." At this came lively protests from the King and Sir Frank.

I came forth with the remark that of course there was an old school of politics, to which in his time Prince Bismarck belonged, and in our own time Lord Salisbury and several other old-fashioned gentlemen in Paris, Petersburg, and Vienna, the aim of whose policy was to group the various states of the continent to work one against another, and to incite one against another. According to this school nothing more was to be done. . . . During the last years, and especially since the Chinese expedition, the continental states have linked themselves closer together. Who could have imagined it possible ten years ago, for example, that the French and German troops should be fighting alongside of one another under a Prussian against a third party? This blood spilt in common has worked wonders, and we are now on

right good understanding with our neighbours across the Vosges. . . . Here in the midst of Europe I stand with my strong army, and together with my allies with whom I am sure I shall endeavour to maintain peace.

King Edward and Sir Frank Lascelles here recognised unanimously the great service rendered by Germany to the cause of peace.

If it is so, I said, then England will have to change its policy in accordance. Economic interests have brought us nearer to France, and we will always find some one with whom we can ally ourselves in economic interests against a third. England cannot fail to observe that there is growing up on the continent a strong movement toward a continental economic union against those who are operating against the economic conditions of the continent. England will do well to take this into consideration. I cannot judge whether it is possible and profitable for England to preserve her splendid isolation, or whether it lies in her interest to veer towards the continent or towards America. Only I might suggest for consideration that America and Russia are probably on more intimate terms than anyone in London can dream of. Russia has in America a very smart and energetic representative, Count Cassini, who knows America well and who divines the right attitude to take with the people there. . . .

I have gained from my conversation with the King of England and Sir Frank Lascelles the general impression that the visit of the Tsar to France together with his expressed wish to see the German Chancellor has caused an extraordinary impression on the part of England. Whether this will be sufficient to draw the English, and especially Lord Salisbury, from their hitherto passive policy, and to open their eyes to the slow but continuous fall of her (England's) prestige and of her world-position, will remain uncertain.[1]

The meeting had proved a failure. The Kaiser's emphatic denunciations of British policy as "Treachery" and his resurrection of the phrase "perfidious Albion" by no means put King Edward in a diplomatic mood, and he seemed happy when the meeting was over. Morocco, the main question on which there was great divergence, was not discussed. The Kaiser had taken the attitude that fear of a Russo-American understanding would drive England into Germany's arms. On the contrary, his language irritated not only King Edward, but also his ministers. Germany was trying to keep on good terms with Russia while

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. pp. 94 *seq.*

warning England of her activities. But the British Foreign Office was at least as well informed as the Wilhelmstrasse, and the conviction rapidly spread that the Kaiser was insincere in his protestations for an alliance, and that the chauvinist tone of the German press more correctly represented the attitude of Germany.

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Immediately after the meeting the King returned to Homburg, and remained there until 8th September, when he left for Copenhagen to join the Queen and the usual family party. Here he met his wife's nephew, the Tsar Nicholas of Russia, and the Tsar's mother, the Dowager Empress, who was Queen Alexandra's sister. At Helsingborg, later in the month, the King met King Oscar II. of Sweden, with whom he soon established the most friendly relations, and a few days later he returned to England. The family gathering in Denmark was of the kind which the King had long since been accustomed to attend periodically. As of old, it was wholly innocent of diplomatic intention. But the increased publicity attaching to the King's movements in his exalted station misled some domestic and many foreign observers into the error of scenting a subtle diplomatic purpose in his established practice of exchanging at intervals visits of courtesy with his royal kindred on the European continent. With his insatiable curiosity about men and things, he always liked frank discussion of European politics with foreign statesmen, and he continued the practice till his death. But such debate was scarcely to any greater degree than in earlier years the primary aim of his foreign tours.

As the year wore on the chances of a solid agreement between England and Germany faded away and covert hostility began to take its place. Neither the Kaiser nor Holstein seemed to know what they wanted, and were convinced that nothing could be done while Lord Salisbury remained at the helm. They regarded the antagonism of Great Britain to France and Russia as a permanent factor, and contemptuously dismissed Chamberlain's broad hint that "if we could not find support in one camp we must seek it in another." Chamberlain was, in fact, now becoming more and more suspicious of Germany. In conversation with Baron von Eckardstein, who was his guest at Birmingham in September, he gave free rein to his annoyance with Germany. As Eckardstein reported to Count von Bülow (September 14):

While I was last week the guest of the Colonial Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, at his country seat near Birmingham, he took the opportunity one evening of giving free vent to his resentment against Germany. I had for some time seen and spoken to Mr. Chamberlain only in a casual way, and had noticed that he had abandoned his earlier friendly tendencies towards Germany, but in general I believed that this prejudice against us was only of a passing nature and under circumstances easy to remove. The utterances as well as the vehemence with which the Minister expressed himself to me about it, leaves one convinced that his opposition to Germany has taken a much deeper root and bears a far more dangerous character than could be supposed.

Mr. Chamberlain started to speak first of all of the position of the public opinion and the press in Germany during the Boer War, and declared that it was a long time before he and his colleagues in the cabinet realised what these untamed outbursts of hate against England really meant. . . .

In the further course of the conversation the minister came to the question of the approaching visit of the Kaiser to England. He remarked that he himself was naturally pleased at this private visit, which was a sign that between His Majesty the Kaiser and His Majesty the King there existed the best relations. Hardly any political consequences could arise out of this visit. Naturally the great English press, under the impression of the private nature of the Kaiser's visit, will behave tactfully and politely; but to draw the conclusion that the public opinion in England was turning again in a direction of friendliness towards Germany would be a great mistake. The attitude against Germany in all circles of the nation had taken too deep roots. . . . [1]

To this the Kaiser added the marginal comment: "And he had most contributed to that!"

VI

Through the autumn of 1901 the German press was once more censuring acrimoniously the methods which Lord Kitchener and his generals were employing in meeting the guerilla warfare of the Boers in South Africa. Finally Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, felt compelled to defend vigorously the British conduct of the South African War. On 25th October, speaking at Edinburgh on the political situation, he ex-

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. pp. 221-4.

pressed a fear that the guerilla warfare which the Boers were now pursuing might compel the government to resort for its suppression to sterner measures than had yet been tried. "There is no subject," he said, "which has given us greater anxiety, more anxious consideration. I think," he proceeded, "that the time has come—is coming—when measures of greater severity may be necessary, and if that time comes we can find precedents for anything we may do in the action of those nations who now criticise our 'barbarity' and 'cruelty,' but whose example in Poland, in the Caucasus, in Algeria, in Tongking, in Bosnia, in the Franco-German war—whose example we have never approached."

The disparaging reference to the Franco-German war roused in Germany a fresh howl of indignation, and the denunciations of England in the German press and on political platforms acquired an added bitterness—a bitterness that was reflected not only in the British press, but also in comments in the House of Commons.

The newly appointed German Ambassador to England, Count Paul Wolff Metternich, successor to Count Hatzfeldt, who had died on 22nd November, did not smooth matters over by his remarks in his first interview with Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on 23rd December 1901. Metternich took advantage of the occasion to express the resentment felt in Germany at Mr. Chamberlain's reflections on the German army in the Edinburgh speech. The tone of Metternich's remarks was by no means conciliatory, and the King saw the need of warning Sir Frank Lascelles in Berlin how unpromising the situation looked.

"I have read very carefully," he wrote to the Ambassador on Christmas Day, "Lord Lansdowne's dispatch to you of 19th instant. In a recent conversation with him he had given me the pith of his conversation with Count Metternich. I cannot look upon it as at all satisfactory, and I do not think the tone of Metternich's language at all conciliatory—in fact the tone seems almost to be menacing! I wonder if he was really authorised to use such strong language? You will, I hope, shortly have an opportunity of seeing and speaking to the Emperor, and I hope you will tell him how anxious I am to form a thorough 'Entente Cordiale' with him on all subjects which are of importance to both countries. But as to a treaty between us, I hardly see how such an arrangement could be possible, as the House of Commons

would make itself so unpleasant to the Government that the good objects would only be frustrated. In spite of jealousies and Anglophobism on the part of Germany, England wishes to be on good terms with her, and walk hand in hand together harmoniously for the sake of peace and the welfare of mankind. In some newspaper I saw it stated that the Emperor intended coming to England for the first anniversary of the lamented Queen's death on the 22nd of January. I can hardly believe this to be possible, but you perhaps can ascertain for certain if there was any wish for it, as I am most anxious that it should be discouraged. Neither Buckingham Palace nor Windsor Castle will for some months be ready to receive the Emperor or any distinguished member of a foreign Royal Family, and the commemoration service on the 22nd will only be attended by the members of the English Royal Family at home.

"One word more before I finish. Could you ascertain whether it would be agreeable to the Emperor if my son came over to Berlin for his birthday, as he has so recently received visits from the heirs to the thrones of Russia and Austria?"

At the same time he sent Sir Frank Lascelles a message for the Kaiser which ran:

King Edward wishes now as ever that England and Germany should stand side by side in all points; but to stipulate this co-operation in a formal treaty would be difficult, as such a treaty in the House of Commons would meet with hesitation and difficulties. King Edward, however, will not cease, together with your Majesty, to work for the welfare of the world.[1]

The King also urged Lord Lansdowne on 26th December to send a full report of his "not very satisfactory conversation with Metternich" to Sir Frank Lascelles, "with a view to bringing to the Emperor's notice the true facts of the situation," and inducing the Kaiser to curb "the rather acid tone of the new Ambassador." But the Kaiser was by no means inclined to rebuke his Ambassador, and it appeared indeed that Metternich was merely echoing his master's voice.

The end of the year found King Edward striving to maintain good relations. The King was honestly seeking conciliation, and his nephew, while seeming in words to welcome the advances, could not refrain from hinting in sinister tone at what might

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. p. 110.

follow a breach between them. By way of a Christmas gift the King sent the Kaiser a Highland suit, lately found at Windsor, which had belonged to the Kaiser's father.[1] The Kaiser was profuse in his thanks (December 30), and made his message of gratitude an occasion for reviewing recent family history :

DEAREST UNCLE—I hasten to offer you my sincere and warmest thanks for the kind letter by Sir Frank, the kind message, and the most touching and splendid gift of dear Papa's Highland dress. It was a most kind thought and has given me great pleasure I well remember having often stood as a boy before the box in Papa's dressing room and enviously admiring the precious and glittering contents How well it suited him and what a fine figure he made in it! I always wondered where the things had gone to, as dear Mamma never said anything about them, and I had quite lost sight of them The last time I wore Highland dress at Balmoral was in 1878 in September, when I visited dear Grandmamma and was able to go out deer-stalking on Lochnagar. Dear Grandpapa's gigantic old jager was still in waiting on Grandmamma and looked after my rifles, whilst a very nice old, but fine Head-keeper, with a good Highland name and a splendid face, stalked with me All these memories came back to me when I saw the suit again, and made me think how the time flies fast, but I am deeply sensitive to the kind thoughts that prompted you to send the things back to me.

The vanishing year has been one of care and deep sorrow to us all, and the loss of two such eminent women as dear Grandmamma and poor Mother is a great blow, leaving for a long time a void which closes up very slowly. I thank God that I could be in time to see dear Grandmamma once more and to be near you and Aunts to help you in bearing the first effects of the awful blow.

What a magnificent realm she has left you, and what a fine position in the world. In fact the first "World Empire" since the Roman Empire. May it always throw in its weight on the side of peace and justice! I gladly reciprocate all you say about the relations of our two countries, and our personal ones; they are of the same blood and they have the same creed and they belong to the great Teutonic race which Heaven has entrusted with the culture of the world; for apart from the Eastern races there is no other race left for God to work His will in and upon the world except ours, that is I think grounds enough to keep Peace and to foster *mutual* recognition and *reciprocity* in all

[1] The King's letter accompanying this gift is unfortunately not available.—S. F. M.

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that draws us together, and to sink everything which could part us. The Press is awful on both sides, but here it has nothing to say, for I am the sole arbiter and master of German foreign policy and the Government and country *must* follow me even if I have to "face the musik." May your Government never forget this and never place me in the jeopardy to have to choose a course which would be a misfortune to both them and us!

With my sincerest wishes for a happy New Year, and joyfully anticipating Georgie's visit here, I remain ever your most affectionate nephew, WILLIAM.

The King's tactful suggestion that his son the Prince of Wales should visit Berlin for the occasion of the Kaiser's birthday was thus warmly welcomed, and the King must have felt relief at the thought that his son's visit would thus prevent the Kaiser from visiting England while Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle were still in the hands of the decorators. A week later the Kaiser again wrote to the King (January 6, 1902) that the Prince of Wales's intended visit "is a most kind idea and gives me great pleasure. We shall do everything to make him like his stay." The Kaiser continued that he had made heroic efforts to silence the anti-English campaign in the German press and that Mr. Chamberlain had ruined his beneficent design.

By dint of soothing and calming the more turbulent sons of my Fatherland and their Press I had at last with great efforts managed to get the papers quiet here. You may well imagine with what dismay and very deep regret I read the last speech of the most ill-advised Colonial Secretary. It is a conglomeration of overbearing bluff and secret insult to the other Nations at large, which will do a great deal of harm, provoking sharp repartees and creating unnecessary uneasiness all over the world. It was a most unlucky thing to do, and if he does not stop these lucubrations, which he certainly likes to spring on mankind in general, one fine day he will wake up and see his country in the greatest of muddles ever yet seen.

At the same time the Kaiser, with an appearance of modesty, offered his uncle "the rank of Honorary Admiral *à la suite* of the German Navy."

It would be a great honour to our Navy, though of course it cannot boast of any history or tradition like the immense fleet at your command; still much work is done and with God's will,

and the Officers and men have shown that their mettle is good, so that I may venture the proposal without transgressing too much on your leniency.

But while the Kaiser and King Edward were thus exchanging compliments, Count von Bülow was meditating a speech that would add effectual fuel to the smouldering fires of Anglo-German animosity. When the Reichstag reassembled on the 8th January, the Imperial Chancellor, amid frantic applause, delivered a stinging rebuke to Mr. Chamberlain's Edinburgh speech. The Chancellor claimed that all sensible people in England would agree with him that a minister who finds it necessary to justify his domestic policy should leave foreign countries alone. "If foreign examples are adduced at all, the greatest circumspection is needed to avoid hurting foreign feelings. England and Germany have always maintained friendly relations with one another, and it is in the interests of both sides that such relations should continue undisturbed. It was inevitable that in a nation like the German nation, which is identified with its glorious army, any attempt or any appearance of an attempt to disparage the heroic character and the moral spirit of the German struggle for national unity should excite profound resentment. Happily the German army enjoys too high a reputation to be injured by distorted censure." Finally, the Chancellor reminded his hearers of Frederick the Great's reply to a reported attack on the Prussian army: "Let the man alone, don't excite yourselves, he is biting at granite!" Other speakers went far beyond the Chancellor in abuse of the British minister, one of them declaring him to be the most accursed scoundrel on God's earth

Naturally Count von Bulow's rebuke to Mr. Chamberlain stirred the anger of the British public, and caused the King no little annoyance. At the King's request Lord Knollys promptly telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne:

The King thinks that matters have been made much worse by what took place at Berlin yesterday.

He thinks he should show his sense of the German Emperor's and the Chancellor's behaviour by allowing the Prince of Wales to remain as short a time there as possible. He proposed, therefore, he should arrive on 26th instead of on the 25th, leaving again on the 28th. Please consult Ambassador.

The King desires me to add that he has serious thoughts of

not allowing the Prince of Wales to go to Berlin at all and of writing to the German Emperor to explain.

Chamberlain now made matters worse by a violent speech on 11th January. He attributed much of the foreign animosity to the calumnies which his political opponents had spread about the English army and the Unionist government. "What I have said," he proceeded, "I have said. I withdraw nothing, I qualify nothing, I defend nothing. . . . I do not want to give lessons to a foreign Minister, and I will not accept any at his hands. I am responsible only to my own Sovereign and to my own Countrymen."

Four days later the King wrote to the Kaiser:

My dear William—I have two letters to thank you for, of 30th ult. and 6th instant. The latter having been delivered to me personally by Baron von Senden Bibran.

In sending my son George to Berlin, to spend the anniversary of your birthday with you, I intended it as a personal mark of affection and friendship towards you, but I must confess that since reading the violent speeches which have been made quite recently in the Reichstag against England, and especially against my Colonial Minister and my Army, which show such a strong feeling of animosity against my country, I think that under the circumstances it would be better for him not to go where he is liable to be insulted or be treated by the public in a manner which I feel sure no one would regret more than yourself. It is very painful to me to have to write this, but I feel I have no other alternative. I regret also to read in the last paragraph of your letter of the 6th instant a very strong remark you make concerning Mr. Chamberlain, and the speech to which you allude is, I presume, the one made on 25th October last year at Edinburgh. You are, I am sure, far too sensible and know England too well to feel certain that he had not the slightest intention of saying anything disparaging to your fine and brave Army. However, the German Press took it up violently and distorted to a great extent what he said. I had hoped that your Chancellor, Count von Bülow, would have explained to the Reichstag that, as Lord Lansdowne repeatedly told Count Metternich, Mr. Chamberlain's words were not only not intended to reflect upon the armies of Germany, but that they appeared to my Government quite incapable of the interpretation which had been placed upon them. Unfortunately, however, he acted otherwise. Ever since my accession, now nearly a year ago, I have had but one desire, my dear William, and that is that the

two countries should "pull well" together in spite of the strong Boer feeling in yours, which however they have a perfect right to express without heaping insults on my brave Army of which you are a Field-Marshal, and accusing them of having committed the horrors in South Africa with which they have been so unjustly charged. I must express my deep regret that these gross libels on my Army should, so far as I am aware, have received no check or discouragement from the German Government

Let me now thank you for the kind feeling which prompted you to offer me the rank of Admiral in your navy, being the same which you hold in mine I accept with pleasure the connection with the gallant service whose efficiency you have so much at heart, and I regard it as an additional proof of your affection towards me.

You will I hope accept as my Birthday gift a picture of your celebrated King, Frederick the Great. I have had it copied for you from the original which hangs at Windsor Castle, and your beloved mother always wished it should find a place among the portraits of Sovereigns at Berlin. I enclose a Memo on the subject from Mr Lionel Cust, my Surveyor of Pictures.

With Aunt and Cousins' best love to you and ours to Donn (?) and your children.—Believe me, your very affectionate uncle,

EDWARD R.

Upon the news of the King's serious displeasure, great efforts were made to alleviate the tension. Count Metternich, as Lord Knollys wrote to the King, was instructed to call at the Foreign Office on 23rd January

to say that a letter is on its way from the German Emperor to the King, written, he understands, in the most cordial terms and expressing a warm hope that the Prince of Wales will go to Berlin for his birthday, where H.I.M. feels sure H.R.H. will be received in a manner befitting a near relation of his.

The amende smoothed over matters for the time being, and the Prince of Wales made a visit of four days as originally proposed, and was received with every mark of honour. The Prince reached Berlin on 26th January, and was cordially greeted at the railway station by the Kaiser. The visit passed off well and, although primarily a domestic courtesy, produced a good effect on the international situation, and spokesmen of the German government assumed a far more friendly tone in their references to England. "Germany," said Baron von Richthofen, the Foreign Secretary, in the Reichstag in March, "should not

forget that in spite of everything, in spite of our different judgements on many matters, we are, after all, still friends and kinsfolk," and he spoke approvingly of the treatment by England of Boer prisoners.[1]

The Kaiser remained in a conciliatory mood, although some gossip which he was wont to credit occasionally ruffled him. He resented rumours which he was told prevailed in England that he was siding with Russia in the China imbroglio. The King was careful to write in conciliatory terms, and the threatened storm passed over for the time.

In spite of the superficial courtesies between King and Kaiser, the realisation had dawned on the King that an Anglo-German alliance was almost impossible. Yet it was essential for the security of Great Britain that she should no longer be without allies on the continent. The King's thoughts now turned to France, his early love, from whom he had been estranged by her pro-Boer attitude during the South African War, but his ministers' thoughts had already turned to Japan.

VII

The Anglo-German negotiations of 1901 had envisaged the admission of Japan as a partner in the new league, but the Kaiser, like King Edward, rather disliked the idea of an alliance with a yellow race. When, however, the British approaches to Berlin were repulsed, London and Tokio, both feeling the risks of isolation, determined to make a pact of their own. In Japan, political parties were divided on matters of foreign policy, and in some quarters it was held that it was of greater advantage to come to terms with Russia than to enter into relations with Great Britain, but the elder statesmen generally preferred the

[1] A month later Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother, arrived at New York, on 23rd February 1902, ostensibly to witness the launch of the Kaiser's new racing yacht *Meteor*. He visited Washington, St. Louis, Niagara, leaving 11th March. He was received with a great display of popular enthusiasm. The Kaiser, writing to the King on 26th February 1902, said:

"Henry had an awful passage, which he is rapidly forgetting under the warmth of his reception, verifying Lord Salisbury's prophecy some years ago of the union among the Teutonic races, which he hopes will take place. This is at least a beginning."

When Prince Henry reached Canadian territory on 5th March, he at once telegraphed to the King his "greetings from Canada."

British alliance. Negotiations were accordingly commenced in August 1901 in London between Lord Lansdowne and Baron Hayashi, the Japanese Ambassador, and in September Baron Hayashi succeeded in persuading his government to approve of their continuance.

On 16th October Baron Hayashi informed Lord Lansdowne that as a consequence of their interview on 14th August, in which the projected alliance was first discussed between them, he had now received authority from his government to discuss the question of an understanding, though he could not yet enter into details. He asked Lord Lansdowne whether it would be desirable that Germany should be a party to the understanding, which would, he thought, then "look much more formidable." Lansdowne replied that British relations with Germany were of a very friendly and intimate description, but that it seemed desirable that Great Britain and Japan should endeavour to arrive at a clear idea of their requirements without reference to any other Power. German interests in the Far East were not as important as those of Great Britain or of Japan, but should Great Britain and Japan come to terms it would then be for them to consider, with reference to the scope and character of the agreement, whether it was one to which Germany might be invited to become a party A little later Baron Hayashi gave Lord Lansdowne a sketch of the arrangement which was contemplated by the Japanese government. He urged that it was a matter of life and death for them to keep Russia out of Corea. Japanese interest in Manchuria was only secondary and due to the fact that encroachments in Manchuria might lead to encroachments in Corea. It was therefore necessary for Japan "to stifle in its inception" any movement by which Russia might obtain preponderance in Corea. As to China, Hayashi said that the policy of Japan was identical with that of Great Britain. Both Powers desired to maintain the integrity and independence of China and the policy of the "open door."

It was agreed that Great Britain should undertake to support Japan if Japan should find herself obliged to go to war with more than one foreign Power to safeguard her interests in Corea. If, on the other hand, Great Britain found herself at war with more than one foreign Power, in defence of her interests in any part of China, Japan would undertake to support her with her whole

strength. But the Japanese government did not propose that either England or Japan should support the other in a war with a single Power, which would be approaching too nearly to an offensive and defensive alliance. If Japan were to be at war with Russia alone it would be sufficient if Great Britain remained neutral; the observance by her of a strict neutrality would of itself be of the greatest assistance to Japan, as it would deprive the Russian fleet of the power of using British coaling stations.

Lord Lansdowne accepted these suggestions as a basis for discussion, and it was agreed that the two Powers would, in the event of such an understanding being arrived at, agree that neither should, without consulting the other, make separate understandings with any other Powers as to Chinese or Corean affairs. Each should treat the other with the utmost frankness. Furthermore, the two navies might with great advantage work together even in time of peace, each Power affording the other facilities for the use of docks, harbours, and coaling stations.

Baron Hayashi's suggestion that Russian designs might be best foiled by an Anglo-German-Japanese alliance was not seriously entertained either in England or in Germany. The King, though he gave it some early countenance, eventually deemed it impossible to admit Germany to the convention with Japan. The King had readily yielded any personal prejudice against an alliance with a yellow race, and did all that fell within his scope to encourage the new alliance, considering (August 14, 1901) that it was "*most* essential that we should give Japan our hearty support on all occasions when it is possible to do so."

In November 1901, before the negotiations reached their final stage and when the whole design was still secret, the Marquis Ito,[1] who until the preceding May had been Prime Minister of Japan, announced his intention of visiting London after pausing at St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Brussels. His attitude to the Anglo-Japanese arrangement had been somewhat equivocal and he was suspected of flirting with Russia. There was a suspicion in Foreign Office circles that the Japanese delay in coming to a conclusion on the alliance proposals was connected with the Marquis Ito's tour. Nevertheless the King urged on Lord

[1] The Marquis Ito, who had been educated in England, was the inaugurator of the Japanese Constitution and had been Prime Minister of Japan four times. He became later a Prince, and was assassinated by a Corean when Resident-General in Corea in 1909.

Lansdowne the need of an elaborate reception in London, in view of the "fuss made of him in St. Petersburg and Berlin."

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"Though he arrives," the King wrote on 26th December 1901, "at a most inconvenient time of the year, I think every possible civility should be shown him on account of the great importance of our being on the best possible terms with Japan I am therefore anxious to receive him personally in uniform to-morrow, with you being present. If not very inconvenient to yourself I hope you may be able to ask him to Bowood from a Saturday to a Monday, and I hope also that Lord Salisbury will ask him to Hatfield for luncheon."

The Japanese statesman, who had arrived in London on 24th December, was cordially welcomed by the King on the 27th. Subsequently on 3rd January he was entertained by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House. The next day he lunched with Lord Salisbury at Hatfield and on 6th January the announcement was made that the King had conferred the G.C.B. on him. The following day he left for Paris.

Meanwhile, on 3rd December 1901, the draft agreement as drawn up by Lansdowne and Hayashi was placed before the Emperor of Japan and the imperial consent was given a few days later. On 30th January 1902 the alliance was formally signed in London. At once the King raised the question as to informing Germany of the agreement.

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"I think," he minuted on 31st January, "that there should be no loss of time in informing German government of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement or else they will learn from some other source—secrecy being *almost* an impossibility. The Emperor will be much interested in hearing the news, as he has strongly recommended a close alliance between Great Britain and Japan."

A week later the British government with the King's approval gave the Kaiser the first intimation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. This was done by Lord Lansdowne to Baron Eckardstein, and embodied in a Memorandum of 6th February 1902 by Sir F. Bertie. He records that the Baron thanked Lord Lansdowne

for the kind consideration shown by his Majesty's Government in communicating to the German Government the information about the Anglo-Japanese Agreement. The German Government regard such a communication as an indication of confidence

in them. They regard the agreement as a general guarantee of peace in China and in the interest of commerce and trade. Count Metternich will call on Lord Lansdowne on his return to London.

The King wrote on this dispatch:

This is most satisfactory. I always knew how pleased the Emperor and Count Bülow would be at being the *first* to be informed of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement.[1]

The Kaiser affected to receive the information with great satisfaction. On 26th February 1902 he wrote with every sign of equanimity to the King: "I congratulate you on the conclusion of the new alliance, which we all look upon as a guarantee of peace in the East."

On 8th February 1902 the King saw Eckardstein privately after a big official dinner at Marlborough House. He spoke with satisfaction of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, but confessed that he felt less happy with regard to Germany.

"Unfortunately," the King continued, "I can't face the future with the same confidence as regards Anglo-German relations. You know of course what has happened of late. If the Kaiser now writes me long letters assuring me of his friendship for England, I cannot, I am sorry to say, give much weight to what he says. The renewed abuse of England in the German press and the unfriendly and sarcastic remarks of Count Bülow in the Reichstag have aroused so much resentment among my Ministers and in public opinion that for a long time at least there can be no more any question of Great Britain and Germany working together in any conceivable matter. We are being urged more strongly than ever by France to come to an agreement with her in all Colonial disputes, and it will probably be best in the end to make such a settlement, because England only wants peace and quiet and to live on friendly footing with all other countries. As you very well know both I and the majority of my Ministers would very gladly have gone with Germany in all Colonial and other questions, but it can't be done. In any arrangement that we may make with other countries in future, it would of course be our principle to avoid any menace against Germany. We only want, as I say, peace and quiet for ourselves and for the world." [2]

[1] Foreign Office Records (Mr. H. W. V. Temperley).

[2] Baron von Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James's*, p. 230; cf. pp. 217-18, *infra*.

That conversation marks the approximate date on which King Edward definitely relinquished the idea of an Anglo-German understanding and turned his attention to the establishment of an *entente cordiale* with France.

The Anglo-Japanese alliance has great historical significance. It was not only the first breach with the policy of isolation which Great Britain had maintained for wellnigh fifty years, but it also initiated the new policy of combination which rapidly developed under King Edward's auspices. The world might now be considered to be divided between three great alliances—the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy; the Dual Alliance of France and Russia, and the new alliance of Great Britain and Japan. The first was supreme in defence, being compact, and boasting the finest military machine in the world; the second had an untried and unexplored reserve of man power, combined with the second best army and navy; the third was supreme in attack, commanding the most efficient navy and dominating the oceans of the world. It was a triangle of conflicting interests, and as Euclid states: "Any two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third."

VIII

The failure of successive attempts to reach an Anglo-German understanding had led to an atmosphere of suspicion on the part of Germany which was not easily clarified. Count Metternich, the German Ambassador, put the case fairly appropriately in letters to the Kaiser and the German Chancellor on 2nd June 1902, two days after the signing of peace in South Africa. The King had immediately telegraphed the news concerning the conclusion of peace to the English Ambassador in Berlin with instructions to communicate the news to the Kaiser, who in reply instructed Metternich to offer his congratulations to the King. After his interview, Metternich wrote to the Kaiser:

A great burden has been lifted from the shoulders of King Edward in that the war has come to an end before his Coronation, and he hopes that the relations between Germany and England may be smooth.

I replied to His Majesty that the feeling in Germany has been for many months quiet and objective in tone, but that

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unfortunately the feeling in England in certain circles and especially in the press has been aggressive. Particularly *The Times* is a disturber of peaceful relations and will not let emotions lie quiet.[1]

The same day Metternich wrote in a similar strain to Bülow, remarking that he made it clear to the King that he regarded *The Times* as the chief obstacle to good relations between Germany and England.

His Majesty seemed to recognise the justice of my remarks and gave expression to the confident anticipation that the discord would again pass away; at this he lifted *The Times* from the table and showed me, as proof that aggressive tones can also be found in the German press, a telegram from their Berlin correspondent headed "A German Opinion" which reproduces the contents of an article in the *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten.* I answered His Majesty that the taking of a single reproduction of an article by a dissenting critic as typical of the whole German public opinion showed sufficiently the spite and distortion of which *The Times* for long had been guilty.[2]

The next day he reported:

As I found out confidentially, His Majesty King Edward yesterday evening expressed to several people his pleasure over His Majesty the Kaiser's congratulatory telegram.

Apart from that, the King has complained about the attitude of *The Times* towards Germany and has spoken to several members of the *Haute Finance* of what action should be taken against it. My interview with the King has thus not failed in having its effect, but I fear that *The Times* nevertheless will not alter its aggressive attitude.[3]

[1] *Die Grosse Politik,* vol. xvii. p. 207. [2] *Ibid.* vol. xvii. 208

[3] *Ibid.* vol. xvii. 209. As Metternich predicted, *The Times* continued its attitude during the succeeding months. Finally, in March 1903, the King, tired of the continual baiting, sent a confidential friend to the newspaper to ask the editor to modify its attitude. *The Times,* however, answered: "It would always be ready to obey His Majesty's wish, which could rebound to its honour; but in this *particular* case, it is completely out of its power to follow the request of His Majesty. It had entered upon a course, careless of any opposition, and its attitude towards us was to be altered under no circumstances." The King was "very deeply disappointed and grieved" at his inability to qualify the newspaper's policy.

IX

A month later, in July 1902, the three leading Boer Generals—Louis Botha, who had succeeded General Joubert, as Commander-in-Chief of the Boer forces, and was responsible for the Boer victory of Colenso; General Christian de Wet, the elusive commander of the Orange Free State forces; and General Jacobus Delarey, who had commanded the Lichtenburg burghers, left South Africa for England. On 16th August they arrived at Southampton, where they were received by Lord Kitchener, Lord Roberts, and Mr. Chamberlain. They declined an invitation to attend the naval review and to meet the King that day, and proceeded to London, where an enthusiastic popular ovation was accorded them. The next day, however (August 19), at the King's request, they visited him on board his yacht off Cowes. The King's tact and courtesy saved the situation, and they were pleased with their reception.

The object of their visit was to persuade the British government to revise, in the interests of the Boer population, some of the terms of peace, but though the tone of Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues was conciliatory all concessions were refused In view of the unwillingness of the British government to increase the sum offered for the relief of the combatants' families the Boer Generals now made an appeal to the people of Europe for donations to a General Boer Relief Fund. Mr. Chamberlain rather demurred at the terms of the Generals' appeal, which understated British generosity and exaggerated Boer needs, but his views had little effect on the Boer leaders.[1]

From 19th to 30th August the Boer Generals were in Holland, where they received an even more enthusiastic reception. Two months later they arrived in Paris, being received by M. Delcassé at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by M. Combes, the Premier, "simply as distinguished visitors." The receptions were neither long nor significant, lasting but ten minutes. The ministers spoke sympathetic words, "well within the bounds of diplomatic propriety." In fact the visitors were rather chilled by Delcassé's formal reception, though Combes was rather warmer in his

[1] The fund collecting was not very successful. The total, including 200,000 marks collected in Germany by the Boer Relief Committee and the money taken at meetings and lectures, was no more than £13,000.

welcome. On the 16th they reached Berlin, where the populace welcomed them with frantic enthusiasm. Their wish to be received by the Kaiser, however, raised delicate issues. The Kaiser, for his part, was at first eager to see the Boer Generals, and for several days obstinately insisted on receiving them against the advice of his ministers. In this he evidently had not the slightest idea of the diplomatic consequences such a proceeding would have entailed. He would, for one thing only, have been obliged to give up the official visit to England that he had planned for November, as the whole public opinion of England had already pronounced itself on this point, and there might consequently have been a frigid "welcome." The King, on hearing of the Kaiser's intention, at once wrote to Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin (October 2, 1902):

The King sees it announced in the papers that the Emperor proposes to receive the Boer Generals. He thinks the Emperor ought to know that his doing so shortly before his visit to England will be very unpopular in this country.

The King wishes no further comment.

Sir Frank Lascelles duly communicated this message to the Kaiser, who after a little thought gave up the idea, but represented his refusal as a spontaneous and calculated expression of courtesy and friendship to England. The King was much relieved by the Kaiser's decision and expressed the hope that the relations between the two countries might continue to improve. The Kaiser, however, a day or two later changed his mind and expressed to the King his willingness to receive "the three Farmer Boer Generals," if they were introduced by the British Ambassador as British subjects.

"I have," the Kaiser continued, "ordered the Government to privately inquire in London whether you countenance this idea, or are adverse to it.

"As they are your subjects they must apply through Sir Frank for a reception; should he decline by your orders, there is an end of the matter.

"Should he accede I would see them informally and leave them in no doubt that they have to keep quiet in my country as I shall not stand any anti-British nonsense for a minute."

So far the Generals had made no communication on the subject either to Sir Frank Lascelles or to the British government, and Count von Eulenburg now suggested that

> the best solution of the matter would be that a hint should be given them not to make the application at all and to give up their visit to Berlin, for certainly a very painful impression would be made in Germany if they were to come here and not be received [1]

The King agreed that if the Generals were to be received at all the British Ambassador should present them to the Emperor, and he pointed out to Lord Lansdowne that if the procedure failed to make it plain that the Emperor received them as British subjects, the effect in England would be deplorable. Lansdowne, however, took the view that in whatever capacity the Generals were received by the Kaiser, anti-British feeling would be thereby encouraged, and that the whole responsibility should be left to the Kaiser. Finally the Kaiser decided to refuse the Generals an audience in any circumstances. There was a strong public feeling, which the Foreign Secretary, Baron von Richthofen, somewhat intemperately reflected, that the Kaiser, by refusing to receive the Boer Generals, as in 1900 he had refused to receive Kruger, had shown an excessive consideration for England.

X

Meanwhile the usual compliments were exchanged between official Germany and official England. On the Kaiser's special invitation a party representing the War Office, which included Mr. Brodrick and Lord Roberts, attended, to the King's satisfaction, the German manœuvres of 1902. The Kaiser was profuse in compliments and hospitality. "The Emperor told me," Lord Roberts wrote to the King from Berlin (September 8, 1902), "he wished us to go where we liked, and that he had given orders we were to be treated as His Majesty's friends. The German officers have been most kind and courteous, and though the people of Berlin do not look at us with friendly countenances, nothing in the least disagreeable has occurred."

Mr. Brodrick, too, reported (September 10) "that the reception accorded to Lord Roberts, the Officers accompanying

[1] Sir Frank Lascelles to Lord Knollys, 4th and 5th October.

him, and to Mr. Brodrick in Germany, has been most cordial and gratifying." He added that the Emperor expressed himself as "much gratified at Your Majesty's permission to his English guests to wear the Orders conferred upon them. . . . The most sympathetic interest in Your Majesty's health and recent illness has been expressed by the Emperor, the Princes of Prussia and Bavaria, and all the Officers with whom the English party have come in contact."

"I am glad," the King replied to Brodrick (September 15), "that you had the opportunity of conversations with the Emperor, who I think takes great interest in our Army. I felt sure that you would be much impressed with the manœuvres and the powers of endurance on the part of the troops."

A little earlier the Kaiser heard that the 1st Royal Dragoons (the British regiment of which he was Hon. Colonel, and which he had not yet seen) were to be transferred from South Africa to India for an extensive period of service. He promptly expressed his disapproval to Colonel Waters, the British Military Attaché in Berlin, and to General Kelly-Kenny, both of whom reported the Kaiser's objection to the King. On Waters' letter the King added the pencil note (August 27, 1902):

> I have never yet heard of a Foreign Sovereign interfering with the station to which British regiments are ordered to be sent, although the Sovereign might happen to be Hon. Colonel or Colonel-in-Chief.

General Kelly-Kenny, writing of his experiences at the manœuvres to the King on 14th September 1902, also reported the Kaiser's wish that the Royal Dragoons should not be sent to India. "I explained that even your Majesty's own regiment, the 10th Hussars, are going to India. H.M. still persisted and said he had never seen his regiment." Kelly-Kenny now suggested that he should telegraph to South Africa to hasten the return of the Royal Dragoons so that they might be in England by the time the Kaiser visited the King. "They will be quartered at Shorncliffe, so that if he lands at Dover he could see the regiment, and if not, we might send a squadron somewhere near Sandringham. It will be good policy to please the Emperor." The King, despite his objection to the Kaiser's interference, agreed to Kelly-Kenny's suggestion.

XI

In spite of the growing alienation between the press of the two countries, the King pursued a friendly course in his relations with his nephew, and the Kaiser appeared to welcome his uncle's proofs of personal goodwill. The Kaiser accepted with apparent eagerness the King's invitation to visit Sandringham on his sixty-first birthday, 9th November 1902, and to inspect the Royal Dragoons during his stay.

"I am glad," the King wrote to Sir Frank Lascelles from the royal yacht during his convalescent tour (August 28, 1902), "that the Emperor is pleased at his invitation to Sandringham, and I shall certainly do my best to make his stay as pleasant as possible, and show him some sport both with partridges and pheasants if only H.M. will not bring *too* large a suite! The smaller the better, as our house is not large, and then I can ask more people to meet him and those I hope that he would like to meet Also the fewer sportsmen in his retinue the better. If you see your way to manage this I shall be for ever grateful to you. I have asked the Emperor to come on the 8th and stay till the 15th, and trust that you will also honour us with your company during that week. We might perhaps teach him 'Bridge'! I presume he will arrive at Portsmouth in his yacht on the morning of the 8th and go straight by train to Sandringham without stopping in London which I will arrange if you in the meantime find out the different particulars. . . . Of course I shall ask Metternich to stay with us during the whole of the Emperor's visit, and trust he will not insist to shoot every day as he is not very deadly!"

The Kaiser, for his part, viewed the visit with pleasure, though he could not refrain from writing suspiciously to the Tsar on 31st October 1902:

Following an invitation from Uncle Bertie I go to shoot with him next month. Should he or his ministers begin conversation about continental politics and our meeting in Reval I propose to answer as follows: "His Majesty the Emperor of Russia as the head of the Dual Alliance, I of the Triple Alliance, we have both the one great object in view, to secure peace for our nations and our friends. We therefore work at the maintenance of Peace and by this for the interests common to the continental nations, who wish to strengthen and develop their commerce and their economical positions." [1]

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. i. p. 67.

The King took personal charge of all the arrangements for the Kaiser's visit. He learned with some surprise that the Kaiser proposed staying in London after leaving Sandringham, but placed Buckingham Palace at his disposal, though his own engagements required his presence at Windsor, where the King of Portugal was to be his guest. He asked the Kaiser to wear "plain clothes" on travelling to Sandringham, "as it is not customary to wear uniform in the country in England."[1]

The Kaiser duly arrived at Port Victoria in his yacht on 8th November, and after inspecting the 1st Royal Dragoons at Shorncliffe travelled to Sandringham to spend there privately the King's birthday. Among those present at Sandringham were not only the Prince of Wales, Count Metternich, Lord Roberts, Mr. Balfour, and, latterly, Lord Lansdowne, but also Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Some years later the Kaiser told Mr. Haldane that he had tried on this visit to "get on" with his fellow-guest, Mr. Chamberlain, but had found it extremely difficult.[2]

One incident during the Kaiser's stay roused the King's ire. The King was a keen motorist, though he knew but little of the internal economy of a car. The Kaiser viewed with interest the King's latest car, and suddenly turning to the King asked him "What oil do you use? Petrol?" The King did not know. Thereupon the Kaiser asserted that potato spirit was the best. The King confessed that he had never heard of it. There for the moment the conversation on motor fuel stopped. A few days later the King was amazed to see on his table an array of all manner of weird bottles and substances. His amazement increased when the Kaiser pointed to them as having been sent from Germany at his express order so that he might explain to the King what potato spirit was like, and what materials were used in its manufacture. The King was not a little impatient at his nephew's officiousness, and rather resented the Imperial object-lesson.

Every endeavour was made to interest and amuse the royal visitor. Not only had the most important members of the cabinet been invited to Sandringham to meet him, but Herr Jan Kubelik, too, was invited to please the company with his violin

[1] Lord Knollys to Sir Frank Lascelles, 7th October 1902.

[2] Mr. Haldane to the King, 2nd September 1906.

playing, and Mr. Albert Chevalier, of "My Old Dutch" fame, and Mr. Horace Goldin, the illusionist, gave appropriate "turns." Almost every day shooting parties went out, but nothing quite seemed to please the Kaiser.

Finally, the King organised a surprise for his guest which was kept secret till the last moment. Sir Henry Irving, the leading actor of the day, was hastily summoned with the élite of his company from Belfast, where he was on tour, for the express purpose of giving before the Kaiser Sir A. Conan Doyle's dramatic study entitled "A Story of Waterloo," Irving taking the part of the veteran Corporal Brewster. Mr and Mrs. Bourchier were also included in the programme in the short piece called "Dr. Johnson," in which Bourchier took the name part.

On 15th November the Kaiser left Sandringham to visit Lord and Lady Lonsdale at Lowther Castle, on a strictly private visit, accompanied by Count Metternich and Sir Frank Lascelles On 20th November the Kaiser left Lowther Castle for Dalmeny, where he lunched with Lord Rosebery, and afterwards proceeded to Queensferry where he embarked in the *Hohenzollern*. The Kaiser's visit went off with correctitude and according to plan, and that was the most that could be said for it. And, as he disappeared on board his yacht, King Edward was heard to breathe, "Thank God he's gone." [1]

The Kaiser, however, thought he had created a great impression. As he wrote to Count von Bulow from Sandringham on 12th November:

> My reception here was hearty and affectionate as ever. The populace met me in a warm and enthusiastic manner so that I personally am quite satisfied. But I believe that they make here a distinction between "the Kaiser" and "the German Government," the latter of which they would like to send to the devil; even as we in Germany make a distinction between the King and Chamberlain, the latter of whom we also wish to go to a hotter place. . . .

The year 1902 ended with outward cordiality between the King and the Kaiser, but with thinly veiled hostility between their two countries. The first attempt of the British government to end the traditional policy of isolation by means of an agreement

[1] Baron von Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James's*, p. 245.

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with Germany had ended in failure. The immediate and surprising conclusion of an Anglo-Japanese alliance left Germany suspicious and irritated, an irritation and suspicion that are only too clearly indicated in the Kaiser's letters to his various correspondents.

XII

The King's interest in foreign politics was by no means confined to those European States which he had himself visited. Wherever British interests were endangered, wherever the policy of his government did not accord with his views, he displayed the most active concern as to the direction of British policy. Although his main interest might be said to lie in the relations of Great Britain with the leading European Powers, he was keen to know all that was going on in the lesser European chancelleries, and in Oriental courts. With Oriental governments, which habitually relied on tergiversation, he favoured strong measures and determined methods in negotiations. He showed no little impatience at the leisurely ways of conventional diplomacy, and urged the employment of plainer speech than commonly figured in dispatches. He was especially suspicious of the old-standing designs of Russia on Persia, and very early in his reign he counselled a frank warning to the Shah against countenancing Russian encroachments on his territory and prerogatives. When an Englishman, Mr. Martin, was unceremoniously dismissed by the Persian government from the Mastership of the Mint at Teheran, the King was astonished to learn from the Foreign Office, in reply to his inquiry, that England had no title to interfere, and he wrote to Lord Lansdowne (October 20, 1901) that he was

> surprised to hear of Mr. Martin's dismissal from the Mastership of the Mint at Teheran and that his Government has no right to object. . . . The King knows that Lord Lansdowne and all the members of the Government are aware of Russian encroachments in Persia with the objects of ousting British interests and influence, and therefore he called Lord Lansdowne's attention to this fresh act on the part of Russia, though in itself probably not one of great importance. Russian influence seems daily preponderating in Persia to the detriment of England. . . . The King therefore feels it imperative on his Government to

take some steps to let the Shah and his Government know that this cannot continue with impunity.

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But the Foreign Office still deemed that the matter was not one in which they could interfere, and the King's protest was unavailing.

The strengthening of the ties between England and Persia had long been a recognised aim of Great Britain's Eastern policy. The King fully recognised the prudence of this scheme, but was sometimes inclined to think that Russia had been permitted by English pusillanimity to counteract England's influence on the government of the Shah When in the summer of 1902 Lord Lansdowne informed the King that a determined effort was to be made to strengthen the British hold on Persia, the King, while expressing entire agreement, added (August 24, 1902): "We should not have lost the hold which Russia now possesses if the Government of the day had kept their eyes open and had had more competent representatives at Teheran to maintain its interests and those of our country."

The question had assumed a somewhat personal colour when, in January 1902, the King heard that the Foreign Office, by some oversight, had neglected to inform him of the offer to the Shah through Sir Arthur Hardinge, the minister at Teheran, of the much-prized honour of the Garter. He at once protested against the procedure, and deemed it undesirable that the Garter should be conferred on a non-Christian sovereign. He admitted that Queen Victoria had conferred the distinction on Sultan Abdul Medjid in 1856,[1] on the Sultan Abdul Aziz on his visit to England in July 1867, when the Queen's religious objections had only been withdrawn at Lord Derby's instance, and on the previous Shah on his visit in June 1873, but he deprecated the suggestion that the statutes should be revised in favour of the Shah. The matter was still under discussion when the Shah's announcement in January 1902 of a visit to England seemed to call for its prompt settlement. Though the King desired to keep on good terms with the Shah, the proposed visit hardly seemed opportune in view of the forthcoming Coronation; but the King accepted the proposal without demur and recommended to Lord Lansdowne, 29th January, that the Shah's wish to inspect "some big

[1] Sultan Abdul Medjid was invested by special commission at Constantinople on 1st November 1856.

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mechanical works" should be granted, but doubted whether his desire to take part in a deer drive in Scotland could be gratified. Finally, when the Shah did arrive in August, the King, owing to his illness, was only able to receive him on board his yacht off Cowes on the 20th. The date was a difficult one on which to arrange for any elaborate reception. The King was prepared to bestow the Order of the Bath on the Shah at their interview and other honours on the Shah's suite. But the Persian monarch declined any honour save the Garter, which he understood to have been promised to him, and his ministers, who were also offered decorations of lower prestige, followed their master's example in refusing them. The King was displeased by the Shah's persistence :

> "It is an unheard-of proceeding," he wrote to Lord Lansdowne, 24th August 1902, "one Sovereign being dictated to by another as to what Order he should confer on him." He regretted that he was "unable to alter the decision already made, which would be giving in to the Persian. . . . Besides, unless given by me personally it loses its whole importance. Should I give Garter to Shah I should have at once to give it to the Sultan who has just given me a high order. Queen Victoria gave late Shah's Garter but it was the first time a Persian sovereign ever visited England."

The renewed suggestion that the statutes should be altered in the Shah's interest before that monarch left for the continent on the 25th was strongly opposed by the King. He was willing to present him with a portrait or a bust of himself, but judged it impolitic to yield to the Shah's desire to be a Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. Two months later the Prime Minister repeated that the government had pledged itself to the Shah and that it was impossible to withdraw. "We have a difficult game to play there" (in Persia), Mr. Balfour pointed out 3rd November, "as Russia has most of the cards." The next day the King assented to the government's proposal "from patriotic motives and a high sense of duty though with the greatest reluctance." He wished it clearly to be understood that he should not again be asked to bestow the Garter on a non-Christian sovereign.

Sir Arthur Hardinge now pressed for ten orders for the Shah's suite—including "one G.C.B. in diamonds" and four

G C.M.G.'s. The King, however, declined (January 2, 1903) to give more than three Orders (one C.B and two C M G.'s) to the officials accompanying the Shah, though Lansdowne pointed out that "if Persia collapses it is well to have friends among men of influence" With the King's assent a special Mission, with Viscount Downe at its head, was sent out at the end of 1902, and on 2nd February, 1903, the Shah of Persia was formally invested with the insignia of the Garter at Teheran

In spite of the King's emphatic wish that "he should not again be asked to bestow the Garter on a non-Christian sovereign" he agreed cordially, three years later, to the bestowal of that order upon the Emperor of Japan.

CHAPTER VII

MR. BALFOUR'S MINISTRY

I

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WHILST still convalescent from his operation for appendicitis in the summer of 1902 the King had to face for the first time a change of ministry. Lord Salisbury's health had long been failing, and his retirement from the office of Prime Minister was growing imperative. He had made up his mind to resign as soon as peace in South Africa should be proclaimed, but when that happy result was achieved the Coronation of the new King was, according to plan, only six weeks off, and he decided to retain his post until that formal confirmation of the new sovereignty.

When the King's sudden illness compelled an indefinite postponement of the Coronation ceremony Lord Salisbury's state of health forbade any further delay of his resignation. Accordingly, on 11th July 1902, he formally withdrew from the King's service in an interview at Buckingham Palace. But even release from office failed to restore Lord Salisbury's health, and when his physician, Sir Douglas Powell, counselled an immediate departure for the continent the King readily excused his attendance at the forthcoming Coronation, and advised him, 30th July 1902, to "obtain that rest to which you are justly entitled." [1]

[1] There were rumours that the resignation was the culmination of a serious difference with King Edward respecting the aims and methods of British foreign policy, and that the King's views of what should be Britain's relations with Germany and France were opposed to those of the Prime Minister. But there seems little ground for this conjecture. Mr. Edward Legge, in his *King George and the Royal Family*, relates that it was a variance of opinion on a very different subject which directly led to the Premier's retirement. The King desired the inclusion of a certain name in the Coronation honours list. "The King mentioned the name. Lord Salisbury replied simply and calmly, 'That, Sir, is impossible.' 'I wish him to be given a peerage, and he must have it!'

When Lord Salisbury died at Hatfield on 22nd August 1903, little more than a year after his resignation, the King addressed appreciative sympathetic letters to his son and successor in the title, as well as to his nephew and political heir, Mr. A J. Balfour, laying stress on Queen Victoria's admiration for his statesmanship He also caused to be inserted in the Court Circular the following appreciation :

MARIENBAD, 23rd *August.*

The King has received with profound regret the news of the death of the Marquis of Salisbury, and deeply deplores the loss of so great a statesman, whose invaluable services to Queen Victoria, to the King, and to his Country, in the highest Office of the State, which he held for so many years, will ever dwell in the memory of his fellow-countrymen.

II

The new Prime Minister, Arthur James Balfour, the nephew of Lord Salisbury, was somewhat of a mystery to the King. He had enjoyed a long political experience, in which he had given ample proof of practical common sense and mental adroitness His uncle had placed every confidence in him, and when ill-health had withdrawn Lord Salisbury on occasion from active work his nephew had taken his place. The contrast between the King and his new Prime Minister was well marked · their temperaments and acquirements differed profoundly. The King, who was a typical Englishman, had the typical English mind , Mr. Balfour, a versatile Scotsman, had a very extraordinary mind, and while the extraordinary mind can often appraise the qualities of the ordinary mind, the converse does not follow. Mr. Balfour had a quickness of wit and fertility of intellectual resource for which few men were a match. He was a man of

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came the royal reply. The Premier was inflexible He refused to comply with his Sovereign's command. . . . Lord Salisbury thereupon made up his mind to quit the post, and he quitted it." This account differs essentially from the King's own statement in his letter to the Duke of Devonshire (May 19, 1902) (quoted on p. 96), in which he states that "He has, however, gone through the proposed peerages two or three times with Lord Salisbury, and it was finally settled some days ago." Whatever the cause, the sudden resignation occasioned great surprise.

the highest intellectual culture; an acknowledged authority on philosophy, a musical critic, and keenly interested in every field of intellectual activity. His mental dexterity, his capacity for forming or for following intricate lines of thought, lay outside the King's scope, and there was little in common between the confident pronouncement of the quickly reached decisions on public questions which were habitual to the King's lips or pen, and the pointed dialectical subtleties which were characteristic of Mr. Balfour's cool detachment of thought. The King was privately conscious that Mr. Balfour was easily his master in argument, and he avoided encounters in which he knew that he could not achieve victory. But the King appreciated the Prime Minister's imperturbability and adroitness, and amid Mr. Balfour's embarrassments with his own followers over the subsequent fiscal controversy, the King was liberal in his display of sympathy with the harassed Prime Minister.

Three of Lord Salisbury's colleagues in his Government—Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Earl Cadogan, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; and Lord James of Hereford, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—left office at the same time as the Prime Minister (July–August 1902), and it was the first duty of Mr. Balfour to fill their places.

The King's convalescence prevented him from any active intervention in the reconstruction of the Ministry, which followed traditional lines. Mr. Ritchie, who had been Home Secretary, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and was succeeded in his old office by Mr. Akers-Douglas, formerly First Commissioner of Works. The King's friend, Lord Londonderry, the former Postmaster-General, somewhat surprisingly received a newly created office, the Presidency of the Board of Education, the duties of which had hitherto been discharged by the Duke of Devonshire, who now retained his office as President of the Council, from which the control of education was thus detached. The reorganisation of the Education Department was satisfactorily completed by the creation of another new office, that of Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, to which Sir William Anson, Warden of All Souls College and M.P. for the University of Oxford, was appointed. Sir W. H. Walrond replaced Lord James of Hereford as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

As Prince of Wales the King had taken a keen interest in all cabinet appointments, and undoubtedly would have done so in this case but for his illness. As it was, he concurred without comment in the selections of his new Prime Minister

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III

The King's personal ambition to develop harmony among all sections and classes of the people turned his attention early in his reign to the chronic problem of Irish discontent. The difficulties inherent in the government of Ireland by England had occupied his mind from an early period of his career, and at one time mid-Victorian statesmen who had sympathised with his youthful desire for political employment regarded the sister kingdom as an appropriate field for his activities. The proposal to abolish the Irish viceroyalty with its political colouring and the hated tradition of Castle rule, and to make a member of the royal house, preferably the heir-apparent, the sovereign's deputy ruler of Ireland, had always commended itself to King Edward, though not to Queen Victoria. Nor had the King questioned the prudence of providing in Ireland a royal residence where the heir-apparent and other members of the royal family might spend each year an appreciable portion of their time. The matter had come before the cabinet more than once in recent years, but no decision had been reached.

The King's friend, Lord Cadogan, who held the position of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at the King's accession, now expressed a wish that he might be relieved of his onerous duties. On the eve of his reign the King had, in discussion with Lord Salisbury's secretary, Mr (afterwards Sir) Schomberg MacDonnell, expressed the wish that his son should be appointed Lord-Lieutenant in the place of Lord Cadogan as soon as Lord Cadogan retired. Lord Salisbury had then been surprised by the proposal and inquired (January 24, 1901) if the financial cost had been considered by the King, though he thought no consideration of money should stand in the way of its realisation. "At present," he added, "the Lord-Lieutenant is obliged to spend from fifteen to twenty thousand per annum in excess of his official income: possibly it might be done for less—say £10,000. But even granting that it can be done for

£10,000 extra, Lord Salisbury feels that it would be rather hard to ask H.R.H. to incur so heavy a burden." For the moment, in view of the immense pressure of other questions, the matter did not go further. But in 1902 the question was again revived within the cabinet, and on 12th August proposals for the abolition of the "political" Lord-Lieutenant and the substitution of "either an important member of the royal family such as the Duke of Connaught to represent the King for a period of five years, or royal visits for a period of six weeks by the Prince of Wales" were submitted to the King. Mr. Balfour favoured the scheme and forwarded the proposals to Mr. Lecky, the Irish historian, for an opinion. Mr. Lecky, however, drew up a hostile memorandum, in which he declared that the Lord-Lieutenants were invariably unpopular, and that their office was unfitted for royalty. Lecky's views convinced the Prime Minister that the proposals were injudicious, and after a little further consideration the subject was pigeon-holed.[1]

With the Irish people the King had abundant sympathy. He yearned to see all his subjects contented, and he hoped that Irish disaffection might be cured by sympathetic treatment of agrarian and administrative grievances. But to constitutional change he was opposed. He was a firm believer in the union, and strongly opposed any measure likely to impair Imperial unity. He deprecated the making of the Irish question a party cry, and more than once recommended the Lord-Lieutenant to hold the balance rigidly even among conflicting races and religions. Religious intolerance he always viewed with impatience, and absentee landlordism found in him no friend.

The persistent rumour that King Edward differed from his mother in his views on Home Rule had little justification, at any rate when he ascended the throne. He had never approved Mr. Gladstone's design of a separate Irish parliament, and though he wished to see all agrarian grievances redressed, he set his face against any drastic reconstruction of the political constitution. None the less there has persisted in Ireland the mythical belief

[1] But the King did not give up hope of seeing his project realised. Three years later, in February 1905, Lord Grenfell was ordered from Dublin to London to see the King, who talked a great deal about Ireland, and said that in his opinion the Lord-Lieutenancy should be abolished, one of the royal family going over for a short time to entertain (*Memoirs of Lord Grenfell*, pp. 176-7).

that the King was bent on satisfying the demands of Irish nationalism at wellnigh all points.

In spite of the King's failure to revisit Ireland after 1885, his personal popularity in that country was still well alive at his accession. The impression left on the Irish mind by the geniality of his demeanour towards all classes and ranks, in spite of political dissensions, was slow to fade. A trustful faith in the new sovereign's Irish sympathies manifested itself among Irish people very soon after his accession. Writing to Lord Esher on 29th August 1901, Mr. T. P O'Connor, M.P., said :

> The King has more friends than perhaps he knows, for he is regarded as full of good feeling for Ireland. I believe I shall live to see the day when he will pass through the streets of Dublin amid the enthusiastic acclamations of his Irish subjects to open an Irish Parliament. You know me well enough to understand that I desire that consummation as much in the interests of England as of Ireland.

The King, to whom the letter was shown, described the prophecy as "curious."

IV

Shortly before the King came to the throne the office of Irish Secretary was bestowed on Mr. George Wyndham, a man of versatile gifts and enthusiastic temperament who, while a loyal adherent of unionist and pacific principles, had inherited a pronounced strain of native Irish sentiment, with which the King fully sympathised. Wyndham set himself in the early days of the reign with high hopes to cure the agrarian sore which in many eyes was the main cause of Irish discontent. Having met on liberal lines the claims of the Irish tenants he sought to extend his reforms to local administration. At the end of 1902 a vacancy in the Irish Under-Secretaryship gave Wyndham an opportunity of obtaining a coadjutor who, there was good ground for believing, would give his remedial Irish policy exceptional effect. On the suggestion of Lord Lansdowne, Wyndham offered the post to Sir Antony MacDonnell, an Irish Catholic of the highest character who had distinguished himself during a long career in the Civil Service of India, where he had dealt successfully with land and other problems not wholly dissimilar to those

confronting Wyndham and Ireland, and who had recently left India to take a seat on the Indian Council in London.

Sir Antony, after giving the offer very careful consideration, was confident that he might usefully help on the cause of Irish peace provided that he was accorded "adequate opportunities of influencing the action and policy of the Irish Government" and was not treated as a mere subordinate to the Chief Secretary. His Indian credentials well justified such a condition, which Mr. Wyndham deemed quite consistent with his programme to accept. That phrase, however, was to be the cause of much dissension.

It was inevitable that such an appointment should excite some suspicion in extreme quarters. Although on familiar terms with the Nationalist leaders, MacDonnell did not share their hostility to the English connection, and believed that a moderate extension of self-government in Ireland might in the long run satisfy Nationalist aspirations and strengthen rather than impair the union. Thus while Ulstermen feared from what was generally known of MacDonnell's political and religious sentiments that his presence in Dublin would forward the cause of Home Rule, the extreme Nationalists suspected that he had gone over to the enemy and was bent on betraying the Nationalist interest.

To the King, MacDonnell's appointment was thoroughly congenial. He appreciated his sincerity and ability, and sympathised with him in the difficulties of his position. In Sir Antony he discovered an influence which sought to lift the long-standing Irish quarrel above the bitterness of party warfare, and throughout the inevitable differences which arose between Sir Antony and Ulster Unionists' prejudice, Sir Antony found a firm supporter in the wearer of the Crown.

V

Within a month of the King's accession Lord Cadogan had warmly pressed on him the desirability of visiting Ireland without delay and thereby putting to the test his belief that the King's personality might fruitfully revive the spirit of loyalty which was believed to lie dormant in the heart of all Irishmen and Irishwomen, apart from a minority of violent irreconcilables. The King favourably entertained the Lord-Lieutenant's suggestion, and early in September 1901 a programme was arranged for the

ensuing spring. Cadogan regarded the proposed visit as a high compliment to Ireland and desired the procedure to be as impressive as possible, even deprecating a visit to Punchestown Races as being unworthy of the royal dignity!

But early next spring, the action of some Nationalist members of the House of Commons, who cheered the news of Lord Methuen's defeat at Tweebosch, near Klerksdorp, on 7th March 1902, gravely offended the King, and he promptly informed Lord Salisbury that his visit to Ireland must be postponed till the end of the South African war. On 13th March official announcement was made that the King, acting on the advice of his ministers, had expressed his regret to the Lord-Lieutenant that the Irish visit could not take place that year. In some quarters the abandonment of the visit was deplored as an undue recognition of Irish disaffection and a barely merited disappointment to loyal Unionists. To Lord Cadogan on 17th March 1902 the King expressed his point of view with no uncertainty:

> There is no disguising the fact that the state of affairs is far from being satisfactory and can only be met by firmness on the part of the Executive, and that the loyal and well-disposed Irishmen should be protected.

Lord Cadogan, who had previously announced his intention of resigning after the Coronation, now offered his resignation, and, in spite of the King's strong wish that he should remain until the royal visit did take place, retired on 20th July 1902. The King in thanking him for his "excellent services" during the long period of his Lord-Lieutenancy touched on the subject of the visit:

> It will always be a matter of sincere regret to the Queen and myself that owing to circumstances which were not under our control we were prevented from visiting Ireland during that period.[1]

The postponement of the visit until after the end of the South African war was undoubtedly the King's intention, but when the question was again mooted the King's approaching Coronation

[1] The Viceroyalty was first offered to Lord Pembroke, who declined. It was then, with the King's full approval, offered to, and accepted by, Lord Dudley, who took up the onerous duties on 16th August.

forbade any discussion of the matter, and it was not until July 1903 that he made his first official progress to Ireland as King.

Meanwhile the suggested royal visit was being advocated in many quarters, even Mr. Harrington, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, expressing the conviction in February 1903 that a loyal reception was certain. Wyndham at the same time urged to the King (February 17) that

> there is now a more favourable opportunity in Ireland than has occurred for a century. If I get what I want, and need, for the Land Bill, a profound and lasting change for the better in the conditions of Irish political life is assured.

But both Harrington's and Wyndham's prophecies seemed to be belied when, on 3rd July, there were discordant interruptions at the meeting of the Dublin Corporation when it was proposed to present the King on his arrival with a municipal address. The meeting was finally broken up by a disorderly crowd in the gallery of the hall, and at a subsequent meeting of the Corporation the address was refused by forty votes to thirty-seven. Nevertheless the King, having approved the arrangements for the tour, determined to abide by them.

When at length all the difficulties were surmounted and his long-contemplated visit to Ireland took place, the feverish enthusiasm which his presence excited seemed to give good ground for the widespread conviction that his personality would prove a golden link between England and Ireland and would end a long-standing quarrel.

VI

The passage through the House of Commons of the Irish Land Purchase Bill, which received its third reading on 21st July 1903, the tenor of which was to encourage landlords to sell their land to their tenants, seemed to open a new era of Irish contentment. It was a good omen that on the same day the King arrived at Kingston on his first visit to Ireland since his accession. It appeared to be a happy moment for Ireland. With Lord Dudley as Viceroy and George Wyndham as Chief Secretary, and with King Edward to back them up, the Golden Age of Irish peace and prosperity seemed about to dawn.

King Edward came to Ireland in a mood of friendship for the

Irish. The Irish of all creeds and classes had a soft spot in their hearts for King Edward, not only because he was a sportsman, but also because he was reported to be very friendly to the Irish claims and to like the Irish, as his mother did not. The story quickly spread that he had asked Sir Antony MacDonnell, "Are the Irish disloyal?"

"No, Sir," came the answer, "but they are discontented."

"What do they want?"

"They want education and they want security in their land."

"I shall come to Ireland with an Education Bill in one hand and a Land Bill in the other"!

The King, who was accompanied by the Queen, drove from Kingston to the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, through eleven miles of bunting and amid cheering crowds, every window and housetop being packed. In spite of the Corporation of Dublin's refusal of an address of welcome, no political ill-feeling dimmed the brilliance of the popular reception. With characteristic tact, on the day after his arrival, when the death of the venerable Pope Leo XIII. was announced, the King entrusted Cardinal Logue with a message of condolence to the College of Cardinals in Rome. That day eighty-two deputations presented addresses of welcome to the King—two carmen presenting an address signed by 1200 jarveys. The King, who was in excellent spirits and in no hurry, discussed many points with those who presented the addresses: as Wyndham said, he was "happy, and dead on the bull's-eye."

On Thursday the 23rd the King reviewed the troops in Phœnix Park under the command of his brother the Duke of Connaught, who was Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. The King and Queen drove through

"an interminable lane of frenzied enthusiasm. The King, perfectly calm among dancing dervishes and horses mad with fear and excitement, bowing and smiling and waving his hands to the ragamuffins in the branches." At the end he "laughed, thanked us all and beamed enough to melt an iceberg. Sir W. Ewart said he had never seen such enthusiasm even for the late Queen"[1]

A visit to Trinity College, Dublin, on the preceding day, which was "one roar of cheers and a frenzy of handkerchiefs," was followed by one to Maynooth on the 24th, and the students of

[1] *Wyndham's Life and Letters*, Mackail and Wyndham, ii. 459.

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both colleges welcomed him with equal enthusiasm. The cordiality of the young priests' reception of the King at Maynooth was well illustrated by their display of a picture of the King's Derby winner "Persimmon," with the frame decorated with ribbons of his racing colours. The King was amused and gratified by the young men's assurance that good priests could be even better sportsmen.

On 25th July the King and Queen left Dublin to stay with Lord Londonderry at Mount Stewart and to visit Belfast, where a boundless enthusiasm marked their reception the next day. But of even greater interest was a yachting tour which followed round the West Coast of Ireland. Embarking in the *Victoria and Albert* at Belfast Lough on 27th July they landed at Buncrana, on Lough Swilly, in order to visit Londonderry. Off the West Coast they made several disembarkations and drove in motor-cars to several remote villages, where the King and Queen inspected the humble cabins, and talked freely with the inhabitants. Some of the villagers hardly knew who their distinguished visitors were and greeted the King as Henry VII.!

Finally the yacht brought them to Cork, where they visited the Agricultural Exhibition. There were no signs of sullenness in the "Rebel City," the crowds were interested and even enthusiastic, while the Lord Mayor of the city received the King and Queen at the Mansion House. From Queenstown they sailed for Cowes, again amid a frenzy of cheers.

One old Irishwoman on the platform just sobbed, saying: "Come back, ah ye will come back!" That was the cry that pierced through the blaring of the bands and the blessings and the cheers. "Come back," they kept calling in every street. And these are the people whom some call disloyal! [1]

Throughout the visit there was a noticeable absence of unpleasant incidents, and all sects and creeds united in welcoming the King. The unbending of the Catholic Bishops was especially commented on, and for this the King's friendly relations with the late Pope was to a great extent responsible.

On leaving Ireland the King issued an address "To MY IRISH PEOPLE," thanking them for their tokens of loyalty and affection, adding on behalf of the Queen, as well as for himself:

[1] *Wyndham's Life and Letters*, ii. 460.

For a country so attractive and a people so gifted we cherish the warmest regard, and it is with supreme satisfaction that I have during our stay so often heard the hope expressed that a brighter day is dawning upon Ireland.

Wyndham, the debonair Chief Secretary, who was Minister in Attendance and in continuous intercourse with the King and Queen, was dithyrambic in his accounts of the impression which the royal visit made on the Irish people. He wrote elatedly on 25th July of "the dramatic and pathetic completeness of the triumph which the King and Queen have won in Irish hearts" He declared that the Irish had "hardly ever been given a channel for their loyalty," and that "the King's visit had put a whole population in hysteria." The King, who was "fresh, happy, most kind, put everybody at their ease." From all quarters testimony was received as to the success of the visit. Mr. Balfour, writing to the King on 3rd September, expressed

his warmest congratulations on the success of Your Majesty's visit to Ireland. No such event has occurred in the history of the Monarchy · a history which so far as Ireland is concerned has been but little diversified by any gleam of brightness Mr. Balfour hopes and believes that Your Majesty's visit, coming as it has done at the culmination of a long series of sincere efforts on the part of the British Parliament to remedy the ills and ancient wrongs of the Sister Island, may mark the beginning of a happier era. In any case, the popularity among all the classes which your Majesty so deservedly obtained must ever be a powerful element for good in all further developments.

Lord Lansdowne, writing to the King on 8th September 1903, from Derreen, said that the visit to that part of the country would not be forgotten.

It is impossible to exaggerate the effect produced upon the simple people of this glen by the kindness of your Majesty's demeanour; they refer to it constantly and always in terms of goodwill and admiration.

Later in the year Sir Horace Plunkett forwarded to Lord Knollys (November 30, 1903) a long and careful statement of what he believed to be the final effects of the King's visit to Ireland:

That the immediate effect was altogether good was so obvious and so generally admitted as to leave no room for doubt. . . .

In this case I have been able to detect no reaction whatsoever from what I would venture to characterise as the irrepressible loyalty of the Irish people, which found so gratifying an expression during His Majesty's visit. . . .

What I now find among the people is the feeling that the King recognises that he is, and prides himself on being, the ruler of Ireland: that he is not only the people's leader, but that he is in real sympathy with them: that he felt for them in their sorrow when they lost the head of their church, and that he went to extraordinary exertions in order to see for himself the darker side of their poverty.

I find a very general belief in the country that His Majesty exercised his personal influence in getting the Land Bill through Parliament. It is also thought that he is quite open-minded on the subject of any constitutional change which may be requred. On the whole I have gained the impression that no King has been so popular among the majority of the Irish as His Majesty since the days of James II., and there is this great difference between the two cases, that the affection for James II. soon came to lack the element of respect.

Looking to the future, it appears to me that the several speeches of His Majesty while in Ireland, and still more the valedictory address "To my Irish People," have laid the foundations for a lasting understanding between the sovereign and all that is worthy in the Irish people. These utterances have been of great value in stimulating the people to new and progressive effort, and they are cited by, and carry weight among, people who would not previously have believed that the sovereign had any personal knowledge of, or interest in, the practical affairs of the people's life. . . .

Before leaving Ireland in July the King was anxious to acknowledge the special service of the Irish Secretary, George Wyndham, who had strongly urged the visit. But Mr. Wyndham, whose social position was such that he felt there could be no substantive improvement of it, declined any decoration, even a K.C.V.O., on the ground that cabinet rank was superior to any that the King could confer. The King argued that the Viceroyalty of India and the Commandership-in-Chief were superior posts, but the Irish Secretary declined to yield his point of view, although he gladly suffered the Under-Secretary, Sir Antony MacDonnell, to receive the K.C.V.O. Precedents were cited from the records of the early visits to Ireland of the Queen, in order to persuade Wyndham to accept some honour, but in vain.

Mr Wyndham, who was deeply troubled by the fear of displeasing the King by his obduracy, at last asked Mr. Balfour on 24th July

"whether he thought it a mistake on public grounds that a Minister in the House of Commons should accept honour. On personal grounds," Wyndham added, "I care nothing about it. . . But I am troubled at seeming ungrateful and obstinate to the King who has done so much here for lasting good and has quite won my heart by his kindness to me."

Mr. Balfour in reply gave weighty reasons in support of Wyndham's attitude, which brought from Wyndham the reply, 26th July 1903:

"I am deeply indebted for your letter which removed difficulty. I can now write to the King and, whilst taking full responsibility for refusal, indicate the weighty reasons which you advance. The King," he added, "wins one's love and respect. It is hard to cast a shadow on his kind face. He is so eager to follow every turn in the labyrinth of Irish life, and all love him here."[1]

The King was equally interested in Sir Antony MacDonnell, who at this time had been offered the Governorship of Bombay. Before leaving Ireland the King sent for Sir Antony and strongly urged him to continue his splendid work with Wyndham in Ireland. MacDonnell, after carefully considering the pros and cons of the question, agreed to do as the King wished. The King in urging this step on MacDonnell was prompted by the desire to see the good work which was being carried out under the auspices and cordial co-operation of Wyndham and MacDonnell carried to a successful conclusion; but before two years had elapsed the Damon and Pythias of Ireland were acutely divided on a question of procedure, with the result that the great partnership was dissolved and a promising career ruined.

A month later (August 10), at a meeting of the Privy Council, when a draft of the King's Speech was laid before the King, he was very anxious that special prominence should be given to his visit to Ireland. In the first draft it had been classed with his visit to Scotland, as if one had no more significance than the other, and he insisted on a paragraph describing the whole Irish

[1] *Wyndham's Life and Letters*, ii. 458-60.

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itinerary — proof of the importance he himself attached to his visit to Erin.

The King was so delighted with the success of his first visit to Ireland as the reigning monarch that he was eager to pay another visit. There was now no question of pro-Boer sympathies to cause postponement or delay, and in the spring of 1904 the second visit of the King and Queen took place. They arrived in Ireland, accompanied by Princess Victoria, on 26th April for a nine days' stay.

In spite of the second refusal of the Dublin Corporation to present an address of welcome, the Corporations of Waterford and Kilkenny on this occasion paid the King that compliment, as well as the Kingstown Urban District Council. The first four days were spent at the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, and one of the gala occasions of the visit was a "command" performance at the theatre. As the King and Queen entered the royal box the audience of 4000, which included all sorts and conditions of men and women, rose to greet the royal pair. Then the gallery, packed as it was with the members of the submerged tenth, struck up "God save the King," and sang the whole of the national hymn through in excellent key and without a note from the band.

This time the King attended the Punchestown and Leopardstown races, to which Cadogan had objected on the occasion of the first tour. "The Queen was as beautiful as ever, the King as kind as ever," wrote Wyndham. There followed a private visit in Southern Ireland to the Marquis and Marchioness of Ormonde at Kilkenny Castle.

A visit to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire at Lismore Castle, near Waterford, whence the King visited the Waterford Agricultural Exhibition, brought the nine days' visit to a close. The reception was everywhere most cordial, but naturally lacked the fervour displayed on the occasion of the first visit.

The Irish Under-Secretary, Sir Antony MacDonnell, who had lately kept the King informed of the improved state of the country, wrote on 11th May 1904 to Lord Knollys that "the King's visit has produced a very good effect and that the manifestations of goodwill towards his Majesty were quite natural and spontaneous." "Very interesting and satisfactory" was the King's laconic autograph comment.

VII

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In the late spring of 1903 public attention in England was drawn to questions of fiscal policy, which excited a warm controversy. On 15th May, in a vigorous speech to his constituents at Birmingham, Mr Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, who had recently returned from a visit to South Africa, boldly challenged the principles of free trade by urging as a crying need of Imperial stability the adoption of a system of preferential tariffs in favour of the Colonies. Chamberlain's action revived in its acutest form the old controversy between protection and free trade. Tariff reform had long been the cry of an active section of the Conservative party, but the creed of free trade was still the firm faith of a goodly number of Tories as well as of all supporters of Liberalism.

A few days later the cabinet discussed the fiscal problem, and the King learned early next month of its divided counsels Within the cabinet, of which Mr. Chamberlain was a leading member, opposition to his proposals at once declared itself, and the Prime Minister, in vain hope of staving off a schism, assumed an ambiguous attitude which created general perplexity. The Liberal party promptly closed all its recent internal dissensions and actively took the field in defence of free trade. It was soon obvious that the divided government was in peril. The King's personal sympathies lay with the free traders, whose doctrine had been adopted by the nation in his early infancy and had not since been seriously questioned. But Mr. Balfour's government was little more than a year old, and the King deprecated any early change of ministry or any premature dissolution of Parliament. The discussion in the cabinet drifted on indecisively through the summer, and on 18th August 1903 the King wrote to Mr. Balfour from Marienbad that he was

glad the Cabinet had postponed till its mid-September meeting any final decision regarding the important matter of fiscal reform which is occupying the attention of the whole country. The King sees the great difficulties which beset Mr. Balfour on this all-important subject, and much regrets the dissension of opinion in the Cabinet which may entail certain changes amongst the Ministers which would weaken the Government. Would it not be possible to refer the whole matter to a Royal Commission

which had been suggested by Mr. Price of Oxford? The matter is mostly of too serious a character for any Cabinet to arrive at a just conclusion in one or two meetings, but if the Royal Commission were appointed without loss of time, consisting of the ablest men in the country and thoroughly conversant with so difficult a problem, it would relieve Mr. Balfour and the Cabinet of a great responsibility.

But Mr. Balfour declined to adopt the royal suggestion, fearing perhaps a verdict which would compel him to take up a definite attitude in face of a divided party. As it was, Mr. Balfour expressed general agreement with Mr. Chamberlain's proposal, but held that the country was not ripe for any taxation of food.[1] On 9th September Mr. Chamberlain forwarded his resignation to Mr. Balfour, explaining that though they were mainly in agreement on the fiscal question, he sought freedom from office in order to explain to the country the full fiscal programme which he had adopted. A week later Mr. Balfour accepted it. Mr. Chamberlain, in tendering his formal resignation to the King on 16th September, offered his

respectful and hearty thanks for the unvarying kindness and consideration shown to him by your Majesty since he had had the honour to be in your service.

Mr. Chamberlain is in entire agreement with the Prime Minister in the policy he proposed to pursue, and is prepared, as an independent member of Parliament, to give to him and to his Administration every possible support.

The general policy of fiscal reforms which Mr. Chamberlain indicated as desirable in his speech at Birmingham was put forward after a previous discussion in the Cabinet which led Mr. Chamberlain to believe that it had the support of every one of his colleagues except Mr. Ritchie.

This belief has proved to be mistaken, and this want of entire agreement in the Cabinet has seriously interfered with the due and effective exposition of the new policy. . . .

Accordingly Mr. Chamberlain recognises that it cannot form

[1] On 16th September Mr. Balfour issued a pamphlet entitled "Some Economic Notes on Insular Free Trade." It was a Cabinet Memorandum which he had already circulated among his colleagues. The tone was academic: the argument sought to prove that the increase of the foreign tariffs and the growth of trusts, coupled with the fact that England was the only country which had adopted free trade, rendered it essential to the maintenance of England's foreign trade to resort to retaliation which could alone reduce hostile tariffs abroad.

a part of the programme in which the Government could hope successfully to appeal to the nation, and its consideration must be postponed till the work of inquiry and education has been completed.

To this work Mr. Chamberlain is prepared to devote himself, and he thinks that he will have a better chance of persuading his countrymen if his proposals are entirely disassociated from party politics and personal interests. . .

The King learned with much concern from the Prime Minister of Chamberlain's resignation, and requested that no announcement should be made and no fresh appointment should be considered until the Prime Minister had consulted with him. Unluckily the resignation was announced before the King's warning reached London. The King acknowledged Mr. Chamberlain's letter of resignation by telegram (September 18):

The King has just received with the greatest regret Mr. Chamberlain's letter of resignation and regrets that he should have found it necessary to take such a step which deprives both the King and Country of his most valuable services

The King feels, however, that he has no option but to accept it and he will write to Mr. Chamberlain as soon as he has seen the Prime Minister.

The following day Mr. Balfour arrived at Balmoral, and, after a long conversation with him that evening, the King wrote to Mr. Chamberlain next day in his own hand ·

The King has received Mr Chamberlain's letter of the 16th instant, and deeply regrets that Mr. Chamberlain resigns the important office of Secretary of State for the Colonies, which for eight years he has held with such distinction and ability. The King has fully discussed Mr. Chamberlain's position with Mr. Balfour since his arrival here yesterday evening, and understands both from the latter and from Mr. Chamberlain's explanation that he proposes leaving the Cabinet in order to have a free hand in bringing forward the strong views which he entertains on the subject of fiscal policy concerning which he has many opponents, though in perfect agreement with the Prime Minister in the proposed important changes. The present Cabinet regard the preferential tariff as premature, but Mr Chamberlain's views differ from them.

Such being the case the King has no other alternative but reluctantly to accept Mr. Chamberlain's resignation, though he considers his loss to the Government and to the country a very

serious one. No Minister of the Crown could have worked harder or more conscientiously than Mr. Chamberlain has in drawing the Colonies closer together with the Mother Country, besides the indomitable energy he has displayed in endeavouring to smooth over the difficulties arising from the long and arduous campaign in South Africa and the incalculable benefit he has rendered to that important Colony by visiting every part of the country.

At the same date Mr. Ritchie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, both convinced free traders and strong opponents of protection, forwarded their resignations to the Prime Minister in ignorance of the course which Mr. Chamberlain had previously taken. Other ministers, equally ignorant of Chamberlain's resignation, retired at the same time—Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Mr. Arthur Elliot—but the Duke of Devonshire, Lord President of the Council, who offered to accompany them, promised to reconsider his procedure. The King was anxious that the Duke of Devonshire should remain in office, but his resignation was only temporarily withheld. In three weeks he too retired.

At one sweep Mr. Balfour had lost five of his most important ministers—one an out-and-out protectionist, and the other four convinced free traders. He was left with an indeterminate central body who for the moment followed his ambiguous lead of striving to steer between Chamberlain's Scylla and Ritchie's Charybdis.

The King, whilst admitting the danger to the government resulting from so large a number of resignations, did his best to help the harassed Prime Minister to fill the gaps. Balfour at once suggested that Mr. Austen Chamberlain should be promoted to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, that Mr. Alfred Lyttelton should become Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Graham Murray, Secretary for Scotland, and that Mr. Brodrick should be transferred from the War Office to the India Office. The King cordially approved the first three promotions, but it was with regret that he sanctioned the migration of Mr. Brodrick from the War Office to the India Office. "Much-needed drastic reforms and changes" were bound to take place in the army, he pointed out, and it was a difficult problem to find for the vacant post "one in whom the public will feel confidence."

The Prime Minister's first choice for the War Office was Mr Akers-Douglas, then Home Secretary, of whom the King had formed a high opinion, but Akers-Douglas, though willing to accept in the "very last resource," declined on very mixed grounds. Mr. Balfour's alternative candidate, Mr. Arnold-Forster, then Secretary of the Admiralty, whom he recommended on account of his "zeal and knowledge" and his safe seat at Belfast, did not meet with the King's approval, though he had no objection to his appointment as "*Under*-Secretary of War, should it be thought desirable to remove him from the Admiralty. ." "A man of the calibre of Lord Selborne," the King urged, "would give confidence to the public as War Minister," but when Lord Selborne himself strongly supported the selection of Mr Arnold-Forster, the King assented with reluctance to the appointment.

But the Prime Minister's task of reconstruction was not yet over. The Duke of Devonshire's resignation was a fresh blow. "This will greatly weaken the Government," the King wrote (October 4), "as the Duke is not likely now to reconsider a decision which has probably been pressed upon him very strongly." The King recommended to Mr. Balfour (October 4) that Lord Londonderry should succeed the Duke as Lord President of the Council, and that Sir William Anson should become President of the Board of Education in Lord Londonderry's place. These suggestions were adopted by Mr. Balfour.

It was just after the reconstitution of the cabinet that the King paid a visit to Lord Londonderry at Wynyard. On that day, 19th October, the King held two Councils, one at 11 A.M. in London and the other at 10 30 P.M. at Wynyard, 250 miles away. The King was much interested to hear from Almeric Fitzroy, the Clerk of the Council, that the last occasion on which a Council had been held in a country house belonging to a subject was in October 1625, when Charles I. held one at Wilton. Lady Londonderry was not a little excited over the honour, and was particularly pleased to hear that the King desired the Council document to be headed in the truly ancient manner "At the Court at Wynyard." At this Council, declaration was made of Lord Londonderry's appointment as Lord President.[1]

Mr. Chamberlain now devoted himself with immense energy

[1] Sir Almeric Fitzroy's *Memoirs*, p. 161.

to the task of educating the public to belief in the virtues of protection. On 16th December 1903, in a speech at Leeds, he announced the formation of a non-political commission of experts which would undertake the drafting of a scientific tariff. The King was somewhat perturbed by such independent action, and again suggested to the government that a Royal Commission should be formed to thrash out the whole question. But the government, he was assured, regarded Mr. Chamberlain's move with serenity and attached small importance to his unofficial procedure, and a Royal Commission would be suspected by the free traders, who would decline to join it. The King expressed his surprise at the government's refusal of a Royal Commission, for which he continued to press, but the Prime Minister resolutely declined, insisting that there was no possibility of unanimous report, and that the opposition did not want an inquiry.

VIII

The fiscal question, important as it was, was to rank in the eyes of the country as perhaps less important than a step now taken by the Conservative ministry. Towards the end of 1902 Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had determined to make a visit at the end of that year to South Africa to discuss with British officials, Boer leaders, and European settlers in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony the best methods of rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the future relations of the newly annexed colonies with the Cape and the Empire. Whilst in South Africa he had treated all the questions at issue in a conciliatory temper, and had done a great deal towards extinguishing the still smouldering embers of distrust and bitterness. After an enthusiastic reception at Cape Town he left for England on 25th February, and reached Southampton on 14th March 1903. The next day he had been received by the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace, and had given an interesting account of his activities.

Whilst in the Transvaal an incident had occurred which was to prove the seed of bitter and acrimonious discussion during the next three years. The mine-owners there had invited his approval of a scheme for the importation of Chinese labourers

under a system of indenture in order to meet the acute dearth of native labour in the mines of the Colony. Mr. Chamberlain had hesitatingly stated that the question was one to be decided by the Colony, and that the home government might be expected to approve the scheme if the Colony wished to adopt it.

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During the following months a thorough inquiry into the question was made in the Colony, and on 23rd November 1903 the Legislative Council at Pretoria adopted a resolution in favour of the importation of Chinese labour. Lord Milner, who was in London at the time, was empowered by the government to carry into effect the recommendation of the Transvaal Council. The King, on learning the news (November 28), informed the Prime Minister that he was "delighted."

The Liberal opposition in England, however, bitterly censured the arrangement, and stirred up an agitation through the country on the ground that the government, by their formal sanction of the Colonial Ordinance (January 6, 1904) permitting the importation of indentured Chinese labour, were favouring a form of slavery and were challenging morality. But the government remained firm, and for the next three years the Transvaal gold mines were largely worked by the Chinese.

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On 11th March 1904 Mr. Lyttelton telegraphed to Lord Milner the King's approval of the Chinese labour ordinance, but without the King's knowledge. The King protested, and at the same time censured the terms of a communique to the press which appeared on the 12th. Mr. Lyttelton at once apologised for the double oversight, which drew the reply from the King (March 15):

The King thanks Mr. Lyttelton for his letter of yesterday evening, and for the terms in which he has expressed himself regarding the incident connected with the dispatch of Mr. Lyttelton's telegram to Lord Milner, acquainting him with the King's approval of the Ordinance giving permission for the introduction of Chinese labour into the Transvaal.

After what Mr. Lyttelton has written, the King feels he can say nothing more on the subject, except to assure him that he shall think no more about it, and that he is certain that the irregularity was entirely accidental.

The King regretted the wording of the latter part of the "communique" to the press, as it created an altogether erroneous impression in the minds of the public, which was only removed

by a subsequent explanation, and he thinks that such explanations on the part of an ignorant public department are always to be deplored even when they are necessary.

The King cannot refrain from taking advantage of this opportunity to express his great regret that so much heated opposition should have been shown to such a necessary measure as the Chinese Labour Bill.

In another matter the newly promoted Secretary for the Colonies omitted to inform the King of his action. On 14th July 1904 President Kruger died at Clarens, Canton Vaud. Lyttelton at once suggested that the government should offer military honours for the funeral of the Boer leader if they were likely to be accepted by his family and friends. The government concurred, but it was not till late in the month that Mr. Lyttelton mentioned the matter to the King through Lord Knollys. The King at once wrote to Lord Knollys:

Please thank Lyttelton for his letter, but he should have communicated with me earlier regarding Kruger's funeral and question of military honours. As Minister he has acted quite out of order, and not according to long-established precedent. Queen Victoria would have strongly, and very strongly, resented such a proceeding. The whole question depends on whether Kruger's funeral in South Africa would provoke hostile demonstrations in South Africa by the Boers against British rule.

It was eventually decided that President Kruger should be buried at Pretoria on 16th December 1904, and the proceedings, although attended by a large concourse of people, were unmarked by any untoward demonstration of feeling.

A month later Lord Milner, the High Commissioner of South Africa, who had recommended a qualified form of self-government for the Transvaal, insisted on retiring, and the government promptly submitted the name of Lord Selborne, then First Lord of the Admiralty, as Milner's successor. The King replied (February 23, 1905):

The King has just received Mr. Balfour's letter in which he recommends Lord Selborne as a successor to Lord Milner. The King is well aware of Lord Selborne's ability and the high qualities which he possesses, especially that of common sense, which is so invaluable in these days. The King, however, greatly regrets

Lord Selborne leaving the Admiralty, as he has presided over that Department with such singular ability.

The King had hoped that Mr. Balfour might have recommended to him the name of a distinguished Peer to succeed Lord Milner, who was not long ago a member of the present Government, but not having done so, he fully assents to Lord Selborne becoming High Commissioner of South Africa.

Since writing the above, the King learns that there are grave difficulties affecting the appointment of the Peer alluded to by the King, in occupying the post of High Commissioner.

On the same day Mr. Lyttelton wrote to the King formally recommending Lord Selborne, and received the reply (February 24).

The King has received Mr Lyttelton's letter of 23rd instant in which he recommends Lord Selborne as the successor to Lord Milner.

Although the King deeply regrets that Lord Selborne ceases being 1st Lord of the Admiralty, a post which he has held with such distinction and ability, he feels sure that as High Commissioner of South Africa he will perform the arduous duties of his difficult position admirably.

The King therefore gives his unqualified consent to the appointment.

The King's interest in appointments had never slackened. He was particularly interested in the diplomatic service, and in the summer of 1904 was busily considering various changes. He strongly pressed the promotion of (Sir) Arthur Herbert, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Darmstadt, to the Legation at Stockholm, and he wished to promote Sir J. Rennell Rodd—"so distinguished and popular a diplomatist"—who was then Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Sweden, to some higher post, as there was "too little for him to do at Stockholm." He thought that Rodd might well have been sent to Morocco in the place of Sir Arthur Nicolson, who was now being transferred to Madrid. But Lord Lansdowne retained Rodd at Stockholm and promoted Herbert to be the British Minister at Christiania.

The King was very critical of individual Ambassadors, and disapproved of their holding office at too advanced an age On 4th February 1905 he yielded to the wish of the Foreign Office to

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retain Sir Francis Plunkett, who was then seventy, till the end of the year in Vienna, but made the proviso that an actual date "should be fixed at once" for his retirement. Lord Lansdowne in reply agreed that the Ambassador should retire in May 1905, and the King promptly suggested Sir Edward Goschen, then Minister in Copenhagen, as his successor—a suggestion that met with the approval of the Foreign Office.

The King was equally interested in all the honours that emanated from the Crown. He was jealous of his rights and impatient of any apparent encroachment, especially from ministers of small experience. When, on 16th April 1904, the new Colonial Secretary invited the King to approve a medal (of which he enclosed specimens) to be given by the Sanitary Board of Hong-Kong for anti-plague services, the King's pencil comment ran: "No medal should be struck or worn except as emanating from the sovereign, and I cannot sanction the present proposal. The proposed decoration is simply *hideous*. The present S[ecretary of] S[tate for the] Col[onies] has neither experience nor full knowledge." Lyttelton in reply quoted a precedent in the case of Ceylon which had met with Queen Victoria's approval. But the King refused to assent to the proposal. "To wear a medal only on certain occasions and in a Colony," he replied, "is simply absurd, and forms a most objectionable precedent. Medals struck for certain occasions and strongly recommended should only emanate from the sovereign."

On the subject of titular honours the King held equally strong views, and he deprecated the practice of "remainders in the case of hereditary titles." He wrote to Mr. Balfour on 19th March 1905:

> The King thinks it may be a convenience to Mr. Balfour to know, in case any application should be made to him to recommend a special "remainder" in respect of Peerages or hereditary titles, that on no account could he agree to such a remainder except in the case of a very distinguished Soldier or Sailor, or of a Civilian who has performed eminent services to his Country.
>
> H.M. has a strong dislike to these "remainders" which he thinks have been far too lavishly given of late years.

Each and every one of these cases goes to prove that the King was resolved that nothing should be done in his name unless he had previously been consulted. For him the ancient formula,

"The King has been graciously pleased to approve," was not a fine-sounding but empty phrase, it was a real indication of the sovereign's approval.

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IX

In the autumn, divisions in the Unionist party on Irish questions added greatly to the many difficulties of Mr. Balfour's government. An enlightened body of Irish landlords formed themselves, on 25th August 1904, under the presidency of Lord Dunraven, into the Irish Reform Association, and a month later, on 23rd September, issued a report recommending extensive measures of self-government, notably in matters of finance in the treatment of private bills affecting Ireland. It was a scheme for the devolution of many of the functions of the Parliament at Westminster, and the impression spread that Sir Antony MacDonnell, who thought a middle course was possible between the existing parliamentary system and an independent Parliament in Dublin, was the real author The extreme Unionists of Ulster denounced the proposal, and Mr. George Wyndham criticised it somewhat drastically, though Lord Dudley, the Lord-Lieutenant, was understood to favour the scheme.

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When Parliament met on 14th February 1905, repeated attacks were made by the Unionists on the government for its retention of MacDonnell in office. Wyndham's attitude also caused suspicion, and Mr. Balfour's philosophic endeavours to show that all the Irish officials were in substantial accord, and that the policy of his government was unchanged in its attitude to Home Rule, hardly made matters clearer.

MacDonnell, who kept the King, through Lord Knollys, informed of his actions, had sent four days earlier (February 10) a written account "of my share in the business," and maintained that it demonstrated that he was justified, in the circumstances of his appointment in Ireland, in helping Lord Dunraven, and that he had been "above-board" and had concealed no action from his official superiors. The King (February 10, 1905) minuted MacDonnell's defence with these words:

> I have read this paper with great interest and I think he has made a very good defence. Should he be attacked the Government should make it public.

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Soon afterwards the new scheme was published. Had it been brought out in 1921 it would have been criticised for its ridiculous moderation; but opinion was not yet ripe, and at once the extreme Orange faction, irritated and alarmed by the prospect of even the most moderate measures of Irish self-government, began to make themselves troublesome.

Within the next week the controversy flamed up to fever pitch. A formidable movement of revolt immediately displayed itself in Parliament. There came a long correspondence conducted in admirable temper, but disastrous all the same, between Wyndham and Sir Antony MacDonnell. Then came the thunder-clap in the shape of an angry discussion in the House of Commons. The popular demand was for the recall of MacDonnell, whose responsibility for the devolution scheme seemed to call for his retirement.

The immediate outcome of the controversy was strange. On 21st February 1905 Mr. Balfour had informed the King that Lord Dudley, the Lord-Lieutenant, proposed to resign, but Balfour thought that step needless, and in the event Lord Dudley remained. Finally, to every one's amazement, Mr. Balfour announced on 7th March that Mr. Wyndham, and not Sir Antony, had resigned. The strain of those few weeks had been too much for Wyndham, who, broken down in health and nerve, had tendered his resignation. Wyndham had been overwhelmed at the very zenith of his fame. His achievements had changed the whole face of Ireland for the better, and had entitled him to rank among the greatest and most successful of Irish statesmen. And then came at once his descent from this throne of glory to the abyss of failure, with that fatal capriciousness of Irish careers. It was a downfall from which he never recovered. Until he had had some months of rest, he was so broken that he was unable to give the explanation of his resignation, and had to go away for some months to recover nerve and health. When he returned, on 9th May, he explained haltingly and ineffectively to the House of Commons his reasons for resignation. MacDonnell had in all sincerity, but rashly, assumed that Wyndham would approve of the devolution proposals. In point of fact he disapproved of them, but the misunderstanding had become too acute for him to remain in office. The obstinate suspicion that he had been tampering with the Union broke

Wyndham's spirit, and nearly destroyed his reason. He had ridden on the crest of one of those waves of optimism in regard to Irish affairs which have strangely arisen from time to time, and its breaking overwhelmed one of the brightest figures in Irish political history.

Finally Walter Long, a typical country squire, was selected to replace the gifted and debonair George Wyndham. But it was felt that the new Chief Secretary should have as his Under-Secretary some other man than Sir Antony MacDonnell, and on 14th March Balfour wrote to the King stating that as a result of Wyndham's resignation the cabinet desired to transfer MacDonnell to the Indian Council, but in spite of the cabinet's resolve MacDonnell remained Under-Secretary for three years longer, even though after the failure of the Irish Council Bill he sent in his resignation, only to have it refused. The prolongation of his appointment was much criticised, though Mr. Balfour continued to insist on the fact that the nomination was temporary and provisional. Throughout his term of office MacDonnell retained the King's goodwill. When he eventually retired, in March 1908, he accepted a peerage offered to him by the Liberal government.

With Wyndham's successor, Mr. Walter (afterwards Lord) Long, who was Chief Secretary for Ireland during the years 1905–6, the King was on very good terms. The fall of the Conservative government from power and the succession of the Liberal party to office, however, involved the replacement of Mr. Long by Mr. James (afterwards Viscount) Bryce. The King was most anxious that every assistance should be given to the new Chief Secretary. When Long was summoned to the King formally to relinquish his office, the King said he had a request to make which he hoped Long would be able to grant.

"I know," he said, "when governments change, the outgoing Ministers do not treat their successors in the same way as they would if it was a mere change of office under the same government and they were to be followed by members of their own party. This is of course natural, and as a rule no doubt right, but the case of Ireland is an exceptional one, and I want you to go and see Mr. Bryce, your successor, tell him quite frankly and freely what are your views of the difficulties connected with the Government of Ireland apart from the question of Home

Rule, what you believe to be the most essential details of administration, and, in other words, give him the benefit of your knowledge and experience just as you would if you were being followed by some political friend of your own."

Mr. Long assented to the request, and had two long mornings with Mr. Bryce, during which he endeavoured to put everything before him, "without, of course, trespassing in any way upon party political ground."[1]

X

Through the session of 1904 proofs of the disintegration of the government majority in the House of Commons accumulated. The King was fully sensible of the precarious situation of the government, which he attributed to the ambiguity of Mr. Balfour's attitude on tariff reform. When on 1st December 1904 the Prime Minister advised the postponement of a distribution of honours from the approaching New Year till the following June, the King rather pointedly asked, "Will the present government then be in office?"

During the winter abnormal unemployment and distress added to the government's difficulties, and the King opened what proved to be the last session of the Conservative government on 14th February 1905. But the new session was no happier for the cabinet than the last, and on 23rd May 1905, in consequence of somewhat ambiguous replies from the Prime Minister to questions as to whether Colonial preference was to be submitted for discussion at the approaching Colonial Conference, a noisy scene took place in the House of Commons and the Colonial Secretary was denied a hearing. The opposition persisted so much that the Deputy Speaker adjourned the sitting. Mr. J. S. Sandars's account of the episode was minuted by the King: "Most interesting, but not edifying."

On 20th July the government were defeated by 200 votes to 196 on a hostile amendment by Mr. Redmond touching the working of the Irish Land Purchase Act. Mr. Balfour at once informed the King "that the Government were defeated by three (?) votes on Irish estimates at 12 o'clock to-night," and added that he had stated to the House that he would have to consider whether it

[1] Long's *Memories*, pp. 169-170.

would be desirable to resign, or to ask the House to reverse the vote and allow the Administration to continue to carry on the business of the session Two days later Mr. Balfour decided that he would neither resign nor dissolve Parliament, but would appeal to the House to reverse the decision. The King, on receipt of Mr Balfour's information, inclined to Mr Balfour's view that he should continue in office, and Mr. Balfour's secretary, Sandars, expressed himself to Knollys as "much struck by the lucidity and cogency of the King's reasoning." On 24th July, four days after the defeat, Mr Balfour announced in the House his decision against resignation or dissolution. His plea, based on precedents and general administrative convenience, was somewhat violently denounced as unconstitutional by Campbell-Bannerman and as contemptible by Mr. Redmond. Language of unusual violence was employed towards Mr. Balfour by Mr. Churchill and Mr Lloyd George, while even Sir Edward Grey said that there could no longer be that mutual respect which ought to exist between the House and its leader. But no division was invited, and there was ultimate acquiescence in the decision.

The Liberals, however, showed themselves still anxious to drive the government from office and adopted definitely obstructive tactics. The King noted on a report of Sandars to Knollys (August 2, 1905): "The Opposition is up to any game and their fury at not getting rid of the Government is undiminished."

Prorogation took place on 11th August, and the King's speech was a meagre record Up to the date of the prorogation the Liberal leaders had continued to urge that the defeat of the government on 20th July, combined with the government's loss of by-elections, proved that Mr. Balfour's ministry had lost the confidence of the country, and that it was Mr. Balfour's duty "to advise His Majesty to refer to the sense of the people." In a final reply on 10th August Mr. Balfour again denied that a single defeat was "conclusive of the course which should be adopted," and argued that precedents approved continuance in office provided that the government retained the support of the House of Commons. He acknowledged "only one plain test whether the Government can carry on the business of the country, and that plain test is, whether the House of Commons support them." "I do not," he

added, "believe that any other plain test can be provided." The *Spectator* denounced Mr. Balfour's argument as based on "an entirely novel view of the Constitution." Those around the King were inclined to detect in Mr. Balfour's insistence on the power of the House of Commons alone to dictate a dissolution of Parliament some disparagement of his personal authority as an adviser of the Crown, and an implied denial of the King's influence in consultation with the Prime Minister. Although the King was very conscious of the constitutional limitations of his personal power, he demurred to the inference that he counted for nothing when the question of dissolving Parliament arose in circumstances which admitted of doubt as to the course which should be taken. The King was displeased that his Prime Minister should assert implicitly that the House of Commons could insist on a dissolution. But Mr. Balfour (September 2) was unrepentant.

Further difficulties were now surging round Mr. Balfour's head. In the autumn a quarrel of no mean proportion broke out between Lord Curzon, the Governor-General of India, and Lord Kitchener, which eventually resulted in Lord Curzon's retirement. The government's choice of his successor, Lord Minto, was coolly received in England. In addition Lord Roberts was urging his scheme of military training on the country, which proved one trouble the more for the Prime Minister.

In November Unionist leaders spoke to their following in the country in conflicting tones. At the annual Conference of the National Unionist and Conservative Associations at Newcastle-on-Tyne on 14th November, Mr. Balfour appealed for unity and claimed for the fiscal policy which he had already defined a rallying-point for all sections of his party. The Liberal leaders, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith, speaking at Portsmouth and Blythe respectively on 16th November, argued that Mr. Balfour's fiscal views remained incurably ambiguous and obscure. On returning to London a few days later Mr. Balfour visited the King at Windsor. His appeal for unity had, he felt, been ineffectual, and he informed the King of his wish to resign. The King expressed the hope "that the Government would meet Parliament," but Balfour, after long and anxious consideration, thought that it was incumbent upon him to resign office at once.

Mr. Balfour's resolve was fortified by the declaration of Mr.

Chamberlain, who, at the annual meeting of the Liberal-Unionist Council at Bristol on 21st November, charged Mr. Balfour with evading the crucial issues, and claimed that the majority of the Unionist party were with himself, and announced active hostilities on the Unionist minority which favoured either free trade, like the Duke of Devonshire, or preference without retaliation, like Mr. Balfour.

Two days later the cabinet met to discuss the ministry's position. Balfour admitted that his appeal for unity had met with a very inadequate response and inclined to an immediate resignation, but he reported to the King next day that the cabinet was divided *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* of 24th November declared, in view of Mr. Chamberlain's attack, that immediate resignation was the only course open to Mr. Balfour. The King, in reply to Mr. Balfour's letter of the 24th giving him an account of the cabinet proceedings of that day, put forward his views without hesitation.

As a Constitutional Sovereign it is naturally not for the King to give advice to his Prime Minister in regard to the position of his Government, but he cannot help regretting that Mr Balfour should not have abandoned his idea of resignation and of his decision to meet Parliament.

The King thinks that Mr. Balfour has probably seen that a portion of the press and some Liberal statesmen in their speeches are strongly urging the alternative of resignation, so that if resignation takes place they will naturally think it due to their articles and speeches. Perhaps Mr. Balfour will think over this.

The King wishes to call Mr. Balfour's recollection to the conversation which he had with him on this subject at Windsor last week, when he, the King, expressed the hope that the Government would meet Parliament. The King remains of the same opinion and he does not see that the situation is in any way changed in consequence of a single speech made by Mr. J. Chamberlain, nor does he see that the convenience of the Opposition, when they come into power, should be particularly consulted.

There is also another point which the King thinks tells against resignation, and which he considers of importance. He gathers that, although immediately after Mr. Chamberlain's Bristol speech a few of the Liberal Press at the first moment of exaltation were in favour of immediate resignation, they have since cooled down, and it appears to him that, speaking generally, the tendency both on the part of the London and the Provincial Liberal press is now to take the line of advising the Opposition

to refuse to accept Office without previous Dissolution by Mr. Balfour.

The King cannot forget what happened in 1873 when Mr. Disraeli declined to accept the task of forming a Government and when Mr. Gladstone was desirous of resigning, and if the Liberal leaders adopt the same course on the present occasion, he, the King, is afraid it would place the Government in a disagreeable and awkward position. He imagines, however, that were Mr. Balfour to be defeated or were he to obtain only a small majority on any vital or test question, the Opposition could hardly refuse to come into power, however much they wish that the impending Dissolution should take place under the auspices of the present Government.

Another cabinet meeting, which proved to be the last which Mr. Balfour summoned as Prime Minister, followed on 1st December. Mr. Balfour laid before his colleagues a memorandum, of which a copy had been sent to the King on 27th November, supplying a full statement of his reasons for immediate resignation. In this he pointed out that the government's position in the House of Commons was precarious. There might be some argument in favour of passing the Redistribution Bill in the next session and resigning during the recess, but that was a less courageous course than meeting Parliament. The practical alternatives seemed to be either a dissolution in January or resignation now. Mr. Balfour strongly favoured the former course, but his colleagues were not unanimous. In reporting the proceedings to the King next day, Mr. Balfour reminded the King that he had decided to resign before Mr. Chamberlain's speech of 21st November, and added:

If Mr. Balfour was leading a party whose efficiency in the House of Commons had any relation to its numerical strength, he would not shrink from the responsibility of carrying on Your Majesty's Government till the legal end of the Parliament. This condition of things, however, is far from being fulfilled, and he is more than ever convinced that, neither from the point of view of the country nor of the party, is it wise to attempt to carry through another Session. Once this conclusion is finally arrived at, resignation seems the proper course both in the interests of those who are going out and of those who are coming in.

So ends the last Cabinet in the present administration, and Mr. Balfour trusts he is not going beyond his duty in expressing to Your Majesty his most grateful thanks for the assistance Your

Majesty has invariably extended to Your Ministers in the execution of their responsible duties, and for the personal kindness with which Your Majesty has honoured him through many phases of his administration.

On 4th December Mr. Balfour tendered his resignation to King Edward, and the only business which remained for the King to transact with Mr. Balfour concerned the outgoing honours list.

The retiring ministers were warned that in accordance with precedent they were expected to send the King farewell messages, and they readily obeyed the call. All paid a tribute to the King's assistance and kindness, but perhaps the most significant tribute of all was that of Lord Lansdowne, who wrote on 5th December that he was

quite unable adequately to thank Your Majesty for the manner in which you referred last night to his work as your Foreign Minister. It has been throughout his term of Office a source of intense satisfaction to him to know that he enjoyed Your Majesty's confidence, and that he was permitted to discuss important questions of foreign policy so freely with Your Majesty. He is deeply conscious of the value of the support which Your Majesty has constantly afforded to him—a support to which any success that has been achieved is largely attributed. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

ARMY REFORMS, 1903–1905

I

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In spite of the necessity for a thorough reorganisation of the army, which became so evident during the South African war, little had been done during Mr. Balfour's ministry to put the military arrangements of the country on a sounder footing. The King, who was eager for drastic reforms, had long been a keen critic of the administration of Mr. Brodrick, but towards the end of the year 1903 cabinet changes resulted in the appointment of a new man as Secretary of State for War, who, it was thought, would be much keener on effecting the necessary reforms.

Lord Esher, the King's friend, who had been a member of the Royal Commission on the South African War, was still very active in his suggestions to the King, and when public interest in the findings of the Royal Commission led to a reprint of its Report, Lord Esher on 6th September 1903 urged on the King that, in view of the public attention to the subject, the opportunity for reform should not be allowed to slip. Sir Arthur Davidson replied (September 9) that "the King agrees in the main and is fully alive to the importance of immediate reform, but nothing can be done until after the Cabinet meeting on the 15th."

But the cabinet, split from top to bottom on the subject of Protection, was then in process of reconstruction, and early in October Mr. Balfour accomplished the difficult task of the reconstruction of his ministry. Mr. Brodrick was transferred to the India Office, and succeeded at the War Office on 6th October 1903 by the Secretary to the Admiralty (since 1900), Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster. The new Secretary of State for War, a fluent speaker and writer, who had been a keen student of naval and

military matters for many years, tackled the task of army reform with great energy. His ideas on the subject had been long and thoroughly thought out, and were already well known, not only to his colleagues, but to the public, from having been fully stated in his books, in Parliament, and in the press. The task of harmonising the almost irreconcilable facts of rigid economy on the one hand, with increased efficiency on the other, was the problem which the new Secretary of State was called upon to solve. The King as the head of the army took the greatest interest in the many proposals and suggestions that were now put before him. The King's aim was, as he wrote to Lord Roberts in October 1903, to do "everything possible to secure the efficiency of the troops who will in the event of war be first sent on active service," and his comments on the leadership of such troops is pertinent, accurate, and interesting.

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"When the present Army Corps system was adopted," he pointed out, "the general principle that met with universal approbation was that the troops should be trained by the Commanders who would lead them in time of war. It, however, appears that this principle has not been carried out. This the King thinks is wrong, more especially as one of the points the War Commission brought out was the difficulty of finding Officers with any experience in handling large bodies of men.

"For instance, the King understands that at Aldershot, where the First Army Corps is supposed to be trained with a view to being ready at any moment to be sent on active service, nearly all the Brigades have no Brigadiers and will only receive one on mobilisation. This seems contrary to the fundamental principle of the Army Corps system. The appointment of the senior Battalion Commander as Brigadier the King considers a great mistake, for not only would this officer not command in time of war, but he is temporarily relinquishing the Command of his Battalion just at the time when its own training comes under his special direction, and, moreover, the fact of his being senior Battalion Commander in no way implies he is a suitable Brigadier.

"The King much doubts the wisdom of spending large sums of money in training men if the Officers who will lead them in war are not trained at the same time. His Majesty always understood that you experienced great difficulty in finding suitable Brigadiers in South Africa, and yet no advantage is taken of the splendid opportunities that exist at Aldershot for training Officers to command large bodies of men.

"Under the present system the King presumes that in the

event of war being declared Brigadiers would have to be found at a moment's notice, but the thorough training the men had received would go for nothing if they were to be led by inexperienced and untried Commanders.

"The King would urge on you the necessity for having at least the First Army Corps in a satisfactory condition, thoroughly prepared for mobilisation, and trusts you will not allow financial considerations to stand in the way of its efficiency. If, however, you find it impossible for financial reasons to have a Brigadier permanently appointed, His Majesty hopes that at least the Brigadier who would command on active service may be appointed for *the summer months* and may have an opportunity of training the men whom he would command in time of war."

The King's pertinent comments had effect, and are indicative of the expert interest he took in matters military.

II

Almost the first matter that had to be taken in hand by the new War Secretary was the question of the administrative reform of the War Office, and it was at the King's suggestion that the Prime Minister appointed in the following month a committee of three to consider its complete reorganisation. Lord Esher and Sir John Fisher had both urged on the King the desirability of a fresh organisation of the War Office on the lines which had already proved efficacious at the Admiralty, and it was these two who were the King's nominees on the committee, but some difficulty was experienced in choosing their coadjutor. The Secretary of State for War considered that the presence of Lord Kitchener would have been of immense assistance in giving the inquiry sufficient weight and authority with the army as well as with the general public; but the difficulties in the way of bringing Lord Kitchener back to England from India were insurmountable. The King deprecated the suggestion of General Sir Henry Brackenbury, and proposed Sir John French. "Brackenbury," the King pointed out to Mr. Balfour on 1st October, "has been so long at the War Office, and what is essential is to have an officer with the ability of Sir John French who has never served at the War Office."

When there seemed a chance of Lord Selborne's being appointed, the King judged that he would make an admirable

chairman if the number of the committee were increased to four. Finally, it was decided to restrict the number to three, and Colonel Sir George Sydenham Clarke (then Governor of Victoria), whom the King thought "well fitted to aid War Office reconstruction," was chosen as the third member, after Lord Grenfell had decided that "under no circumstances could he accept membership of the Commission." Lord Grenfell's refusal was not well received, and in mid-April he received a letter from Lord Knollys expressing the King's regret at his refusal and pointing out that "when the Prime Minister desires a senior Officer of the Army to assist the Government, the request should be complied with." Grenfell replied, indicating the difficulties of his position as a soldier on full pay serving under officers whom he "knew would be abolished," and asking for an audience with the King that he might explain his position, and "if, after hearing my views, His Majesty considers I should serve, I should accept at once." The King promptly gave Grenfell an audience and, seeing the disciplinary difficulties, released him from the duty—to Grenfell's great joy [1]

The King stipulated that the committee should be formally appointed by the Prime Minister, and not by the Secretary of State for War, and desired that in the notice issued to the press his own approval should be intimated. Mr. Balfour's objections to the step were quickly overcome, and the press notice of 7th November read :

The Prime Minister, with the King's approval, and after consultation with the Secretary of State for War, has appointed a Committee "to advise as to the creation of a board for the administrative business of the War Office, and as to the consequential changes thereby involved."

The King's wish that the committee should meet "at the *earliest* possible date" was fulfilled, and the King was kept fully informed of its deliberations by the Prime Minister and Lord Esher. On 28th January 1904 Mr. Balfour suggested that a change should be made in the name of the War Office; the King promptly replied from Windsor (January 29) :

The King has carefully considered Mr. Balfour's memo regarding the advisability of changing the name of the present War Office.

[1] Lord Grenfell's *Memoirs*, pp. 170-1

He cannot alter, however, his own views on the subject, which Mr. Balfour is aware of, nor does he think that the arguments brought forward in the memo are sufficiently strong to make so great a change necessary in a name which has been in existence for 50 years, when Lord Panmure was War Minister.

The Country besides is accustomed to the name of "War Office," and it would not either be incongruous under the proposed new system of administration.

That day Mr. Balfour submitted to the King the committee's preliminary scheme for War Office reconstruction. The first recommendation was for the formation of a Defence Committee of the cabinet under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, with a permanent secretary. The second recommendation was the formation of an Army Council modelled on the lines of the Board of Admiralty, of which the chairman should be the Secretary of State for War, with four military members (the Chief of the General Staff, the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, and the Master-General of the Ordnance, each of whom should control a special branch of Army business) and two civil members who should deal with civil business and finance. Extensive decentralisation was recommended. The office of Commander-in-Chief was to be abolished, and such of his functions as were not undertaken by the military members of the Council should be entrusted to a newly created Inspector-General, with an organised staff.[1]

The army had long suffered from the dual control of the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State for War, and the new system would bring the army, through the Secretary for War, who would be chairman of the new Army Council, directly under the control of Parliament. At the same time the disappearance of the Commander-in-Chief would leave unquestioned the position of the sovereign as nominal head of the army. By 26th February the Esher Committee completed its task, and the final report was then presented to the Prime Minister.

The proposed reforms, although meeting with the approval

[1] Lord Hartington's Commission, appointed on 7th June 1888, which reported on 20th March 1890, made recommendations which were never adopted for the reorganisation of army administration on the lines of Lord Esher's Committee in 1903–4. To the abolition of the Commandership-in-Chief Queen Victoria then raised objection, owing to the Duke of Cambridge. Cf. Vol. I. pp. 556-60.

of Lord Roberts, the Duke of Connaught, Sir John French, and other distinguished officers, were by no means so cordially received by the King's friend, General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny; but the King, while considering objections, gave his full sanction to the proposed reforms, and was anxious that the government should act on them on its own responsibility before Parliament met—a suggestion which the government adopted.

The King expressed great satisfaction with the expeditious activities of the committee, and desired to confer on the three members some special decoration in view of "the quickness with which they accomplished their onerous duties and the great ability which they displayed." The King believed "that the results of their deliberations and inquiries will be a great benefit to the Army and improve its efficiency." He compared the committee favourably with the slow action of Royal Commissions, whose recommendations were "usually pigeon-holed in a Government office." But Mr. Balfour (May 21, 1904) resisted the King's wish to decorate Esher and his colleagues, pointing out that Fisher had become First Sea Lord and that Clarke was to get a post at £2000 a year as secretary to the new Committee of Imperial Defence. The King, although still anxious to confer some honours on the members, deferred to the Prime Minister's views that postponement was politic, though he urged on Mr. Balfour (May 21) that their names should be kept in mind for receiving some signal mark of honour later on. He hoped that the cabinet would let the House of Commons know of its "high approval of the manner in which Lord Esher and his colleagues have acquitted themselves of the very difficult and somewhat thankless task which was imposed upon them." Subsequently he noted with pleasure the thanks of the government and of the army to the members who had worked so indefatigably on the committee, which were expressed by the Secretary of State in a letter voicing the general feeling of admiration for the rapidity, the boldness, and wide scope of their labours, and for the ability of their report.

Meanwhile, on 6th February, the government had commenced to give effect to the recommendations in the report; the appointments to the new Army Council had been made, and the dual control of the army by the Secretary of State for War and the Commander-in-Chief had been obviated by the abolition of

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the latter post, which was then held by Lord Roberts.[1] The King, although a thorough admirer of Lord Roberts's notable services to his country in India and South Africa, had been very critical of his appointment as Commander-in-Chief.

"Nobody," he wrote to Mr. Brodrick on 15th October 1902, "has a higher regard or admiration for the present Commander-in-Chief than I have, and his name will go down to history as one of England's most distinguished military men. Though his appointment to his present post was inevitable under the circumstances, he was too old to undertake such difficult and responsible duties, nor does he possess thorough knowledge of the British Army, being an officer of the Indian Army. He is, I fear, somewhat undecided and changeable in his views, and shows signs of weakness in character."

Eighteen months later, on 18th February 1904, when, as a result of the acceptance by the government of the new scheme, Lord Roberts was retired from the position of Commander-in-Chief, the King made public his deep appreciation of the veteran Field-Marshal's services.

"I desire," he wrote, "on behalf of my Army to express my deep regret at taking leave of Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, K.G., V.C., who retires from active employment on relinquishing the high office of Commander-in-Chief, which will not again be filled.

"For over fifty years the Field-Marshal has served Queen Victoria, my beloved and lamented Mother, and Myself, in India and in Africa with the highest distinction. During that long period he has performed every duty entrusted to him with unswerving and unfailing success.

"I am unable to part with My Commander-in-Chief without returning publicly to him My thanks, and those of My Army which he has commanded, for the invaluable services he has rendered to my Empire, and I ask all ranks of My Army to profit by the example of his illustrious career, and of his single-minded devotion to his Sovereign and to his Country."

The abolition of the post of Commander-in-Chief had rendered necessary the appointment of an Inspector-General, and the committee early turned their attention to the selection of a suitable officer. On 16th January they saw the Duke of Connaught,

[1] Six weeks later, on 17th March 1904, the King's second cousin, the Duke of Cambridge (whom the King always referred to as "Uncle George"), who had been Commander-in-Chief from 1856 to 1895, died at the age of 84 years, and at the funeral ceremonies five days later the King attended as chief mourner.

who, as Esher wrote to the King that day, "impressed them greatly."

"This letter," the King commented, "is satisfactory to me as regards my brother, and very interesting besides. I hope the Government do not consider the whole matter 'cut and dried' without my having something to say on the result of the Committee, and especially on the appointments of the officers to hold the different positions. Please thank Esher for his letter and give him the gist of my observations."

Before, however, the post of Inspector-General was offered to the King's brother, the committee deemed it an act of courtesy to offer it to Lord Roberts, "but it will be put in such a way that he cannot accept it." At the same time Mr. Balfour offered to him a seat on the Defence Committee, "laying great stress on the personal service he would be to him there." The King approved the dual suggestion, and on 13th February 1904, after Lord Roberts had declined the Inspectorship and accepted the seat on the Defence Committee, Lord Knollys wrote to Mr. Arnold-Forster:

The King learns that Lord Roberts has refused the offer which Mr. Balfour made to him of the post of Inspector-General, and he therefore hopes that the appointment of the Duke of Connaught to it may be made as soon as possible and announced without delay.

He would suggest that the announcement should state that the Duke had been appointed Inspector-General of the Army, but that he would retain his command in Ireland until 1st May (His Majesty is anxious he should be in Ireland on the occasion of his visit there at the end of April), and that the post had been offered to Lord Roberts who had declined it, but had accepted a seat on the National Defence Committee.

Perhaps you would kindly direct a draft of the proposed announcement to be sent to the King before publishing it.

The King was anxious that there should be a special salute for the new Inspector-General, as there had been for the old Commander-in-Chief, but Arnold-Forster was opposed to the idea, and when the proposal came before the Army Council they advised that there should be no special salute. The King's pencil comment on Arnold-Forster's letter to him reporting the decision of the Council (June 6, 1904) was emphatic: "No go. The Secretary of State for War is as obstinate as a mule."

An important item in the recommendations of the Esher Committee was the Decentralisation Scheme which they had sketched in draft, and by means of which many administrative duties would devolve on a subordinate general in each of the principal commands. Until the new system of commands and districts had become an accomplished fact, it had not been possible to give effect to these recommendations. Now that the change had been fully effected, and the new commands had been settled and published in Army Orders, it was possible to move ahead. Steps were taken at once to carry out the Decentralisation Scheme, and eventually an Army Order introducing its proposals was published in January 1905.

In the subsequent proposals for decentralisation and other schemes of army reform the King took the greatest interest, and was quick to rebuke the Secretary for War for failing to keep him informed of the latest developments. On 22nd October 1904 Lord Knollys wrote to Mr. Arnold-Forster:

> The King desires me to say that he should be much obliged to you if you would have the goodness to give directions that the proceedings of the meetings of the Army Council may be sent to him, as is always done in the case of the Defence Committee meetings.
>
> He is a little sorry to find that he has not been in any way consulted on the questions of the best mode of promulgating decentralisation and of the General Staff Scheme, both of which he believes are now either practically settled, or are at all events in an advanced stage towards completion.
>
> During the late Queen's reign not a step was taken at the W.O. in connection with the Army of the slightest importance without her being informed of what was going on, and the King hopes the same course will be pursued with him.
>
> H.M. knows how anxious you always are to meet his wishes, and he thinks, therefore, it is only fair towards you that you should be made acquainted, in this friendly way, with his views and feelings on the subject.

Arnold-Forster replied that the letter gave him "some concern," and confessed that he was under the impression that he had at all times done everything in his power to acquaint the King beforehand with all changes of importance which were contemplated in the army.

I have submitted most carefully drawn papers prepared in a way which I thought most likely to convey the required information clearly and intelligibly. I have on more than one occasion expressed my thanks to the King for allowing me to converse freely with him on Army matters, and have told him that I should consider it a privilege to be permitted at any time to give him further detailed information on any point in which he took a special interest. . . .

The question of decentralisation, he pointed out, involved a considerable amount of detail, and was still under consideration by the Chief of the General Staff and the Adjutant-General.

A month later Arnold-Forster sent to the King the Army Orders on decentralisation. The interest which the King took in the subject may be gauged by Lord Knollys's letter to the War Secretary of 24th November.

"I am desired by the King," he wrote, "to assure you, in reply to your letter of the 22nd instant, that he will not lose a moment in acquainting you with his views on the Army Order on decentralisation which you have sent him.

"His Majesty has been busy carefully examining this Order ever since he received it, but it is not possible for him to go properly into such an important and complex question without closely studying the papers connected with it, and this takes a certain amount of time.

"The King considers it right, and as Head of the Army his duty, to give his closest attention to all the points bearing on a subject of such magnitude before expressing his opinion upon it, and he regrets that the Army Order was not sent to him in draft at an earlier date, when His Majesty might have been able to give an indication of his views which would have obviated the necessity of refusing his assent to certain proposals submitted in what is practically a final form."

Finally, the King's observations on the Army Order were voluminous. On almost every point the King made a judicious comment or suggestion, and these were duly transmitted to the Secretary for War, who answered each of the King's queries or suggestions in detail. Several of the King's suggestions he turned down, sometimes without adequate reason, and this led the King to reaffirm his objections, whilst accepting other explanations. Among other points on which he insisted were that he "really cannot sanction the administration and discipline of the army

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being in any way directed by the Treasury." To the proposal that Aldershot and Salisbury should be amalgamated the King commented :

> The King understands Mr. Arnold-Forster's explanation and agrees to his recommendation. His Majesty is, however, of opinion that Salisbury Plain should be available as a manœuvring ground for the Aldershot Division and neutral Divisional arrangements, without having to refer to the War Office every time it is considered necessary that the troops of either Division should cross their respective "frontiers."

With regard to the reduction of the Aldershot Command he was "very glad to find from Mr. Arnold-Forster's explanation that it is not intended to reduce this Command. He thinks, however, that the omission of Corps Troops from a Return is misleading. They form part of a Division, and it is only natural to suppose that if they are not mentioned they are not included." On the question of the utilisation of Guards in time of war, the King thought that the four Battalions of Guards "should remain at home, and their place in the 5th Brigade should be filled by Infantry Line Battalions." With regard to the Home District Command, the King pointed out that

> the Home District Staff as it now exists consists of about 8 officers, whereas the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Command consists of about 20. His Majesty cannot conceive it necessary that practically there should be any addition to the working Staff of the former, or at all events not to a greater extent than one or two extra Officers. He attaches much importance to the Home District being a separate Command, and as Mr. Arnold-Forster will remember, the Esher Committee recommended it. The King always understood that the Headquarters of the Eastern Command were to be at Colchester or at some other place out of London. It seems to His Majesty that under any circumstances it must create a certain amount of confusion, even with the present arrangement, that there should be two Headquarter Staffs within half a mile of each other, and he is afraid that if what he suggests is not done now it will never take place.

One of the items in the army reorganisation scheme was for the creation of a greater number of junior officers, and the King suggested that the age for admittance of subalterns into the Guards might be reduced to eighteen. To this Arnold-Forster

objected, and stipulated for an entrance age of nineteen. At the King's request Lord Knollys now wrote to the Secretary for War (March 15, 1905):

I have submitted to the King your letter respecting the age of admittance to the Guards

He desires me to say that he partly understands your objection to the 18 years minimum limit, but he thinks that 18½ years would meet your difficulty, and he would be glad if this proposal could be carried into effect.

A week later Arnold-Forster wrote at length that the Army Council, after having considered the King's views, had unanimously come to the conclusion that

it would be most undesirable to reduce the age of entry below 19. Not only would a reduction to 18½ practically preclude the entry of any candidates for the Guards through Sandhurst, but the introduction of such a precedent would render it impossible to deal with the Cavalry on any other lines than those adopted for the Guards. . . . To prevent entries to the Cavalry through Sandhurst would be exceedingly bad policy, and there can be no doubt that the adoption of 18½ would absolutely put an end to such entries. . . .

The next day Lord Knollys wrote a two-line letter to the Secretary for War:

The King desires me to say that he will give way on the age question, but that he does so reluctantly.

III

Besides the question of the reconstruction of the administrative machinery of the War Department, two problems, both of them of great importance and urgency, demanded the attention of the responsible heads of the army. In the first place, the Treasury, no less than the general public, was pressing for increased economies, and for immediate reduction in military expenditure. Secondly, it was becoming daily more and more evident that the existing system of enlistment for the army was rapidly approaching the stage of a complete breakdown.

By the end of the year 1904 it had become clear to the Secretary of State that so long as the existing system remained in force, no appreciable reduction in the Estimates could be

anticipated. No adaptation or alteration of detail would avail to meet the demands of the Treasury, and at the same time to ensure military efficiency.

Mr. Arnold-Forster now drew up a statement showing the weakness of the existing state of things, and indicating where and how the system had broken down. The chief evils to which attention was drawn were the inadequacy of the first class reserve, the lack of a striking force that should be immediately available on the declaration of war, the failure of the three years' system of enlistment, the deficiency in the militia by some 34,000 men, the failure of the linked battalion system, and finally a grave deficiency of officers in the junior ranks. His remedies for this serious state of affairs were contained in a second memorandum, in which he defined the requirements of the country as a long-service general army supplemented by a short-service army capable of rapid expansion in time of war, both of which should be available in case of need for war overseas.

Both memoranda met with the approval, amounting in many cases to enthusiasm, of almost all the senior officers to whom it was submitted. They were, however, unwilling as yet to commit themselves to any immediate acceptance of reforms, and the dilatory methods of the government began to provoke definite hostility, which now found an outlet in the press. On 28th June the dissatisfaction was expressed in the House of Commons, and the adjournment was moved to call attention to the alarming deficiency in the drafts required for India and South Africa, and the confusion and uncertainty prevailing owing to the prolonged delay in the announcement of the government's scheme of army reorganisation.

Early in July the government had arrived at an agreement in favour of the policy of the Secretary of State, except upon one material point. This point was the question of the militia, many of its friends on both sides of the House fighting strenuously to prevent any modification being made in the conditions of the "Old Constitutional Force." By now the deadlock seemed almost complete; for if the policy of dual long and short service armies were to be carried out as the government had decided, the necessary reductions of expenditure could be made only by further reductions of regular troops, or by the abolition

of the militia. At the last moment a compromise was effected. The Secretary of State was to be permitted to make his statement in the House, to explain the full scope of his policy, and to set forth what in his own view was the most feasible method of dealing with the militia question. On the other hand, he was to make it clearly understood that in speaking of this solution of the militia problem he was stating his own personal views, and to give a pledge that the constitution of the militia should not be altered in accordance with this view unless and until the consent of Parliament were given, and the approval of the country secured [1]

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It was not until 14th July 1905 that Mr. Arnold-Forster produced in the House of Commons his long-expected scheme of Army Reform which was designed to remedy the defects exposed by the South African War Commission. The Prime Minister had previously submitted the scheme to the King in June According to the new scheme there was to be a general service army of men enlisting for nine years with the colours and three years with the first class reserve , and a home service army to serve at home in time of peace and abroad in time of important war composed of men serving two years with the colours and six years in the first class reserve. Linked battalion service was to be abolished. Recruits for the regular army might be attracted by improving the amenities of life in the service and the chance of employment on leaving the army.

The King was anxious for more drastic measures of reform than those suggested by the Secretary of State for War, and at his request his Secretary wrote to the Prime Minister in June

I am desired by the King to say that your letter giving an account of Mr. Arnold-Forster's latest scheme affecting the Army, which was laid before the Cabinet, and agreed to, gives His Majesty much concern.

The King is strongly of opinion that what the Army, especially the Officers throughout the Army, requires at the present time, is a period free from disturbance and constant change.

The King could understand the necessity for a large plan of Army Reform, based on clear and definite principles, and accepted after consultation and discussion with the most eminent Soldiers here and in India. But the King must view with regret proposals, which are admittedly "half measures," of a tentative

[1] H. O. Arnold-Forster's *Memoirs*, p. 250 *seq.*

character, the urgent necessity for which is not apparent, and which are not calculated to reassure the officers and men of the Army, who have been disturbed by the uncertain prospects held out to them under the various projects which the Secretary of State has foreshadowed from time to time as imminent.

The King cannot withhold his consent from the proposals which he is advised by the Cabinet to approve, but he cannot conceal his strong misgiving as to the effect which the announcement will have upon the Army, whom they will not reassure, and upon the public, whom they will fail to satisfy. . . .

In consequence of the King's desire for more drastic reform, Lord Knollys saw Mr. Arnold-Forster a week later, and duly reported the conversation to the King, who replied (July 27, 1905):

Your interview with Arnold-Forster reported by you is very interesting. I am glad that he sees the importance of not looking upon his Army Scheme as conclusive. There *must* be changes in it before it becomes *un fait accompli*! After the session is over he ought to go more fully into detail and consult experts. . . .

In the House itself the reception of the proposals had at first been undoubtedly promising, and if open support from ministers had been forthcoming during the remaining days of the session, it is probable that the militia proposals, and with them the creation of the home service army, would have gone through without further opposition. But before the session ended, the tide of criticism began to swell, and dissatisfaction was frequently expressed with the treatment contemplated for the militia and volunteers.

Arnold-Forster, stiff in opinion, clear and incisive in expression, was perhaps a little intolerant of the views of others equally entitled to be heard; nevertheless he secured the acceptance of the lines on which in his judgement the general staff of the army ought to be organised, and proceeded to create a long-term general service army with a short-term home service army, and a striking force of 15,000 to be maintained always ready at Aldershot; but the question of the future of the militia was set aside, and it was not until a few years later that the King saw introduced a thorough reorganisation of this line of defence.

IV

One of the suggestions which Mr. Arnold-Forster sponsored was for the creation of an *Army Journal*, and this aroused the King's active opposition. The King pointed out that the objects of the journal, which were to encourage officers to express their views on military subjects, were totally opposed to the army tradition of silence. He held that a great deal of mischief would be caused by "indiscriminate writing, printing, and speaking," and in a letter from Goodwood House, Chichester, to his private secretary (July 27, 1904) he wrote:

> As regards the *Army Journal of the British Empire*, in spite of many letters approving of it from many distinguished men, I cannot change my views, which I have always held on the subject, that writing on the part of officers in any journal, excepting those who have left the service or are not likely to be employed again, is greatly to be deprecated. I should much like to hear Sir Wm. Butler's opinion about the advisability of it. I will neither sanction nor support it in any way, and this should be clearly understood, so I wash my hands of the whole matter. The A[rmy] C[ouncil] can now act as they please, but they will (at least I hope so) regret having started it. I hope that it may be of short duration!

Mr. Arnold-Forster in reply (August 3, 1904), whilst sympathising with the King's views, believed that the *Journal* would "tend to diminish and not to increase the fashion for unauthorised, and therefore undisciplined writing. If I did not think so I should be much more hostile to it than I am." He pointed out that it would be very difficult to stop the publication at the present stage, "when notice has been given throughout the whole world, and a large amount of MS. has been received for publication."

In the event the *Army Journal* was established, but did not last very long. A year later, in June 1905, a further suggestion was made for the establishment of a Cavalry Journal—which caused the King to comment: "Sorry if Cavalry Journal is to be established! Are R.E. and R.A. to have Journals too!"

In such cases the King was an innovation-opposing conservative, but where the actual efficiency of the army was concerned he was keen to see the most drastic methods of reform carried out to a speedy and successful conclusion.

V

1903 — Ætat. 61

In details of uniform the King was profoundly interested, and he was untiring in criticism of proposed changes emanating from the War Office, although he was inclined to approve alterations which officers themselves suggested. When the question of uniform of the newly formed Imperial Yeomanry arose in 1901, the King strongly opposed Mr. Brodrick's choice of khaki. "The War Office," he wrote (April 16, 1901), "have khaki on the brain. Of course it is more invisible than blue and red, and admirably adapted to those climates where there is but little vegetation and chiefly dust and mud," but he pointed out that the Imperial Yeomanry would "only be sent abroad on an emergency" and urged that "the uniform at home, at any rate to begin with, could be blue serge." But when the King found that Lord Roberts too thought that "compared with blue there can be no doubt of the superiority and invisibility of khaki," he agreed to khaki, though he characteristically hoped "that facings would be made attractive"!

The King took under his special protection all the regiments of Guards, and paid close attention to the smallest details of their uniform and accoutrements, no detail being too small to escape his close attention. Dress regulations he scrutinised with the greatest care, and his decided views on the colour and cut of tunics, on the shape of buckles and of buttons, often found vent in minute criticisms of proposed alterations. With a view to economy Lord Roberts, on 16th July 1903, formally submitted to the King that all ornaments (*i.e.* sheepskins, horse-cloths, shells, browbands, rosettes, horse-plumes, bit-ropes, etc.) should be abolished from the saddlery of all officers excepting those belonging to Household Regiments. But the King promptly objected, and Lord Roberts withdrew the submission. Six months later (January 1904) the King inspected the new great-coats for the Guards, and suggested that they should "have more room in the back, between the shoulders," more "play" or "room" in the skirt, should "button higher up in front," and should "have shoulder-straps." This opinion was communicated to the Adjutant-General, who "noted accordingly."

Even the colour of puggarees came under his eagle eye, and when in August 1905 he heard that it had been decided to do

away with the red puggaree worn by the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, he protested, pointing out through Major Frederick Ponsonby to Major-General Plumer, who was then Quartermaster-General, that

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as the matter, so far as His Majesty can remember, was never submitted to him, the King presumes that this was decided upon some years ago, and that it is only now that it has been found necessary to enforce this change owing to the 2nd Battalion of that Regiment going to Gibraltar.

The permission originally given to wear a red puggaree was apparently granted to the 46th to perpetuate the distinction gained by them in the American War of Independence, and it would seem a pity that this should be now lost sight of. Of course the regulations with regard to khaki may not admit of any coloured puggaree being worn, but there would seem no objection to a red puggaree being worn with a white helmet which is not used on active service.

The King knows you agree with him in thinking that everything possible should be done to keep up these historical distinctions which are so precious to a Regiment, but would like to know the facts of the case before expressing an opinion.

To the reply from Major-General Auld, Director of Supplies and Clothing, that the Commander-in-Chief had in 1880 declined to allow the red puggaree to be worn and that the Quartermaster-General was thus confirming a previous decision, the King replied from Marienbad through Major Frederick Ponsonby (August 22, 1905):

The King desires me to thank you for your letter and for the Memorandum relating to the wearing of the red puggaree by the 46th Regiment.

His Majesty is curious to know what were the reasons which led the Commander-in-Chief to refuse the application of this Regiment to be allowed to wear the red puggaree in 1880.

It seems to the King somewhat illogical to allow the Northumberland Fusiliers to wear a red and white puggaree and at the same time to abolish the red puggaree of the 46th.

There may, of course, be very good reasons for this, but the King, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the 3rd Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, naturally takes a great interest in this Regiment and would be sorry to see such a historical distinction lost sight of.

His Majesty, therefore, hopes the Quarter-Master General will

bring the matter to the notice of the Army Council and that, unless there are strong reasons against a coloured puggaree being worn, permission may be given to the 46th Regiment to continue a red puggaree at Gibraltar.

The King's protest had effect and six months later (February 19, 1906) Mr. Arnold-Forster's successor at the War Office, Mr. R. B. (afterwards Lord) Haldane, formally submitted

that your Majesty may be graciously pleased to approve of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry being permitted to wear a red pagri with the foreign service white helmet to perpetuate the distinctive red tuft granted to the 46th Regiment for gallantry in the field in 1777.

The distinction of wearing a red pagri with the foreign service white helmet was originally granted to the 46th foot (now the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry) in 1873, but was discontinued in 1880 when pagris were for a time abolished.

The revival of this distinction will be much appreciated in all ranks of the Regiment.

In the margin are the words " Approved E.R."

VI

Throughout this period, though the King was in cordial social relations with Mr. Arnold-Forster, there had been many differences of opinion between the royal head of the army and the civilian head. Two questions, however, arose in the summer of 1905 which strained their good relations to the breaking-point. The first concerned the controversial question of army pay. On 5th July 1905 Mr. Arnold-Forster submitted to the King, without any covering explanatory memorandum, the new edition of the " Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion," which was to replace Queen Victoria's Warrant of the 26th October 1900. The King requested explanations on some points, and a voluminous and detailed epistle was sent in reply which answered many of the King's queries, but did not satisfy either the King or the Duke of Connaught that certain officers would not be penalised by the new scale. The King therefore wished to be assured (July 11) " that no officer or soldier mentioned or referred to in the Warrant would be affected disadvantageously as regards pay, promotion, or allowance, in comparison with the conditions of the present

Warrant." Mr. Arthur Loring (Mr. Arnold Forster's secretary at the War Office) replied with a carefully written letter which seemed to the King to be somewhat ambiguous. Thereupon, at the King's request, Sir Arthur Davidson wrote (July 13, 1905):

In reply to your letter the King certainly does not wish for any assurance based on a misconstruction of words.

Put into plain English, the matter stands thus: The King will not sign the new Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion, etc., until he knows whether it reduces the pay or allowances of those who serve under its provisions.

You have said that those now serving have their interests protected, and are in no case worse off under its provisions than they were under the old Warrant, but you have not said whether those who enter the Army after the promulgation of the new Warrant are in any case worse off than they would be under the old Warrant, and it is on this point that His Majesty wishes to be informed.

Where there are new appointments, there must, of course, be new rates of pay. Are these new rates of pay and allowances based on the same scale as those in the old Warrant, or are they on a lower scale ?

It is impossible to take individual cases, and ask for comparisons in each instance, as that would necessitate going through all ranks and appointments in the Army, but His Majesty wishes for information on the lines indicated and hopes that it may be forthcoming.

To this blunt request for direct information, Mr. Loring replied with a long memorandum, which still did not satisfy the King, and through Major Ponsonby he now wrote from Marienbad to Mr. Loring (August 26, 1905) that he did not consider the explanation satisfactory, and reiterated his opinion that if the new Warrant reduced the pay of officers it might have "the disastrous effect of augmenting the feeling of unrest and discontent which unfortunately already exists in the army."

No reply was made until 15th September, when Mr. Arnold-Forster complained of "the difficulty in which the War Office was placed by the withholding of His Majesty's approval of the new Pay Warrant." The Army Council, he pointed out, were in full agreement with the King, and were strongly of opinion that there should be no reduction in the pay of serving officers, and he stated that the Army Council were in communication with the

Treasury over this point, but although the Warrant was thus incomplete and unsatisfactory he still expressed his "earnest hope that the King's signature may now be granted." But the King, as Sir Arthur Davidson wrote on the 22nd September, was "unwilling to sign a Warrant consolidating new rates of pay which would effectually seal the fate of all those who complain of the way they have been dealt with by the new Royal Warrant," and he pointed out with truth that the difficulty of which the War Office complained was of its own making. "The King's interest," he added, "is not confined to officers on the staff but extends equally to all officers in His Majesty's Army, and it is on their behalf that His Majesty is withholding his signature from a Warrant which will, unless some concessions or alterations are made, place the officers alluded to in the annexed memorandum in a disadvantageous position financially, which the King considers is wrong both in the interests of the officers affected and of the army at large."

Matters seemed to have reached an impasse, and it was thought that the best way out of it was for Sir Arthur Davidson, representing the King, to discuss matters with Lt.-Col. Bromley-Davenport, the Financial Secretary to the War Office, who was authorised to represent Mr. Arnold-Forster. The result of the discussion, which took place at the end of October, was that the King was assured that the rates of pay, with the exception of those of Brigade-Majors and of the Personal Staff, had not been altered or lowered, but that where duties had been reduced or divided the pay also had been reduced, while additional appointments had been created so as to give employment to more officers. In addition the War Office promised to consider at once the question of restoring the field allowance. The matter, however, continued to be discussed for another month, and it was not until the King was definitely assured that no officer would suffer any financial hardship under the new regulations that he finally gave his approval to the Royal Warrant for Pay and Promotion.

The long-drawn-out struggle indicates most completely the King's interest in all matters appertaining to the army, and his determination to get at the root of an involved question. The King had been fighting in the interest of the army, not only against the War Office but also against the Army Council and the Treasury, and he had won his point that however desirable

economy might be, it should not be practised at the expense of the more promising officers in the army.

VII

In the meantime another incident occurred that gravely vexed the King. In the case of the Royal Warrant the King was justified in protesting against signing an incomplete document, the scope of which was unknown even to its originators, but when on 25th July 1905 the King received from Mr. Arthur Loring an amended army order regarding General Officers Commanding Districts and Accountants, together with the urgent request that it should at once receive His Majesty's sanction, the King assented, but was not a little angered at such a peremptory request coming through a subordinate. He immediately instructed Lord Knollys to write to the Prime Minister (July 27, 1905).

I am desired by the King to forward to you the enclosed letter, dated the 25th instant, which was sent to me by Mr. Loring together with the memo to which the letter refers.

Upon a matter of such importance, involving a question of principle which Lord Esher's Committee considered vital to any scheme of decentralisation, the King thinks that he had a right to receive an explanation written by the Secretary of State for War himself.

It has not been customary to make explanations to the Sovereign in the form adopted by Mr. Arnold-Forster, and you will probably agree that this is not the form which communications between the King and his Ministers should take.

I am further desired by the King to say that it will be impossible in future for His Majesty to give his assent to proposals of this degree of importance at such a very short notice, practically of a few minutes only.

The King would have wished to consult you and the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the point raised, but the method adopted by Mr. Arnold-Forster made this impossible, unless the King was prepared to allow the Secretary of State to use His Majesty's name in a Parliamentary debate, which I am sure you will agree would not have been proper or desirable.

The King regrets, in fine, not only the form, but the substance of the change recommended to him which reverses the policy deliberately adopted six months ago.

The King hopes that you will kindly make such arrangements with Mr. Arnold-Forster as will in future prevent these informal

communications on most important subjects being laid before him without the constitutional advice upon which the King has a right to rely, and without time being afforded him for conversation with his Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister at once showed the letter to the erring Secretary for War, who apologised to the King for the manner in which the army order had been submitted. He pointed out, in extenuation, that " any action which he took was due to the very pressing nature of the emergency." He was unable to leave the House of Commons at the time,

and as it was represented to him that it was of the highest importance to meet the views of the Treasury and of the Public Accounts Committee before the matter was brought before the House of Commons, he instructed his Private Secretary to communicate with Lord Knollys and to explain the circumstances which rendered such a sudden application necessary and to ask whether the point could be submitted to the King.

Lord Knollys was good enough to obtain his Majesty's sanction under these peculiar circumstances, but Mr. Arnold-Forster feels that he is to blame for not having left the House and asked for the privilege of an audience.

Mr. Arnold-Forster humbly submits the expression of his sincere regret for this error in judgement, which he trusts the King will be pleased to overlook in consideration of the special calls which the House of Commons makes upon the King's Ministers at the present time.

Mr. Arnold-Forster was, of course, unaware that Mr. Loring's letter would be regarded in the light of a final submission to His Majesty, as he well knows that the privilege and duty of making such submissions is strictly limited.

The King accepted the apology, but the incident gravely prejudiced the good relations between monarch and minister. Yet when, a few months later, the sands of the life of the moribund Conservative government ran out, nothing could exceed the flowery compliments which Mr. Arnold-Forster lavished on his sovereign. He took the opportunity of reviewing at length the various changes which he had initiated. He pointed out to the King (December 6, 1905) that he had

had the privilege of serving His Majesty for three years as Secretary to the Board of Admiralty, and for two years as Secretary of State for War, and asked leave to offer his most

sincere and respectful thanks to the King for his unfailing kindness and forbearance.

If any small measure of success has rewarded his efforts, Mr. Arnold-Forster feels that it is in a large degree due to the unfailing encouragement and kindness he has received from His Majesty. Mr Arnold-Forster looks back with singular pleasure on the fact that he has never left the King's presence without feeling cheered and helped, and he is deeply conscious of the generous consideration that has been accorded to him.

After reviewing at great length the effect of the army changes which he had initiated, the retiring War Minister concluded :

Mr. Arnold-Forster has not been permitted to effect the reform of the Militia which he believes to be essential to the well-being of that Force, and he regrets that this important branch of the Army continues—as under the existing system it must always continue—in a most unsatisfactory state, and useless for war. . . .

Finally, on Monday the 11th of December he delivered the seals of office to King Edward at Buckingham Palace, and spoke feelingly of the sympathy and great kindness that had been constantly shown to him by the King, both in his difficult task as War Minister and in his special trial of ill-health. "I thanked him for his kindness, which has indeed been constant, and then there was nothing more to say or do." [1]

Much credit is undoubtedly due to Arnold-Forster for the patient way in which he overcame some of the difficulties relating to army reform, but it was evident that much still remained to be done, and the King, whose interest in this subject had never flagged, was to find in Arnold-Forster's successor, Mr. R. B. Haldane, a man more of his own ideas, who was not afraid to suggest and carry through the "drastic reforms and reorganisation" which the King had long advocated.

[1] Arnold-Forster's *Memoirs*, p. 295.

CHAPTER IX

THE CREATION OF THE ENTENTE CORDIALE

I

1902 — Ætat. 60

WITH the recognition early in 1902 that an Anglo-German alliance was an impossibility, one of the last obstacles to a cordial understanding between France and Great Britain was removed. A few months later peace was signed in South Africa and the bitterness occasioned by the conflict now began to give place to a desire on the part of both the Channel neighbours to draw together for the consideration of foreign affairs. The seed had been sown some years earlier.

The failure of the Marchand Mission at Fashoda in 1898 had resulted not only in the evacuation by France of that disputed territory, but also in the transference of the French portfolio of foreign affairs from M. Hanotaux to M. Delcassé. M. Delcassé, who was to guide French policy for seven eventful years, made up his mind from the first to bring England and France into an effective accord. This wish was the keystone of his policy throughout his tenure of the Foreign Office, and to him must be assigned the full credit of initiating the Anglo-French entente.

M. Delcassé entered on his path in circumstances that hardly promised well for the success of his policy. The Fashoda incident had aroused patriotic heat on both sides of the Channel, and the French Foreign Minister was bound at the outset to assert his country's pretensions, but he was not entirely responsible for Captain Marchand's mission and risked offending many of his friends by offering to withdraw French claims, on terms to be settled subsequently. With wise prescience he chose in November 1898 a statesman of his own views, M. Paul Cambon, to fill the French Embassy in London, which Baron de Courcel was vacating.

M. Paul Cambon was admirably fitted to advance in England the cause of Anglo-French friendship. Prudent and firm, pertinacious and adaptable, long-sighted, yet tactful and tactical, uniting charm of manner with strength of will, he was the ideal instrument for carrying out the policy of his chief, and within a few months an agreement on the Fashoda question was reached with Lord Salisbury. M. Cambon now suggested to Lord Salisbury that there were several other matters which might be settled in an equally friendly spirit. But Salisbury shook his head and smiled: "I have the greatest confidence in M. Delcassé," he said, "and also in your present government, but in a few months they will probably be overturned and their successors will make a point of doing exactly the contrary to what they have done. No, we must wait a bit." Both Delcassé and Cambon knew how to wait. On Lord Salisbury's retirement from the Foreign Office in November 1900, in favour of Lord Lansdowne, M. Cambon reopened the question of a *rapprochement*. But for the time being the prospect of an Anglo-German agreement forbade discussion.

Early in 1902 events began to happen with rapidity, and at a state dinner at Marlborough House on 8th February M. Cambon and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had a heart-to-heart talk on the possibility of an agreement. Baron von Eckardstein, the German Chargé d'Affaires, was also there, and his account of what happened after dinner is interesting:

> While we were smoking and drinking coffee, after dinner, I suddenly saw Chamberlain and Cambon go off into the billiard room. I watched them there and noted that they talked together for exactly 28 minutes in the most animated manner. I could not, of course, catch what they said, and only heard two words "Morocco" and "Egypt."
>
> As soon as the French Ambassador had left Chamberlain, I entered into conversation with the latter. He complained very much of the bad behaviour of the German press towards England and himself. He also referred to the Chancellor's speech in the Reichstag, and said: "It is not the first time that Count Bulow has thrown me over in the Reichstag" (referring to Bülow's repudiation of the offer of alliance made in Chamberlain's Leicester speech of 30th November 1899). "Now I have had enough of such treatment and there can be no more question of an association between Great Britain and Germany."

As Eckardstein was about to leave Marlborough House he was told the King wished to see him in his study. The King, after referring to the failure of attempts to secure an Anglo-German understanding, added, "We are being urged more strongly than ever by France to come to an agreement with her in all Colonial disputes, and it will probably be best in the end to make such a settlement." [1]

Eckardstein now realised, as had the King and Mr. Chamberlain, that an Anglo-German alliance was impossible, and that an Anglo-French agreement was destined to take its place, and he duly reported his opinion to Berlin.

Lord Lansdowne, too, was readier for discussion than Lord Salisbury had been, and three weeks later Cambon mentioned to him the subjects on which he would like to negotiate an agreement.

"He asked," relates Cambon, "whether he might make a note of them, but I said he need not trouble as I would write him a personal letter enumerating them. This I did, and—foolishly—never kept a copy of it. Next evening (some time early in 1902) there was a big dinner at Buckingham Palace. I was placed next to King Edward, who said: 'Lansdowne has shown me your letter. It is excellent. We must go on. I have told the Prince of Wales about it. You can discuss it also with him.' After dinner the Prince of Wales, now King George, spoke to me eagerly of the letter and said: 'What a good thing it would be if we could have a general agreement.' He wanted to know when it would be concluded. I told him that we could not go quite so fast as he might wish, but that with patience and goodwill it ought to be possible." [2]

II

In the meantime much had already been done by Lord Cromer, Consul-General of Egypt, to smooth the way of Cambon and Delcassé.[3] He had long been anxious to place the finances of Egypt on a better footing by some friendly

[1] Baron von Eckardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James's*, p. 230. Cf. p. 144 *supra*.

[2] Cambon's interview in *The Times*, 22nd December 1920, and Lord Sanderson's MS. notes on the interview sent to the Foreign Office, 28th February 1902.

[3] On 24th July 1907, on the occasion of Lord Cromer's retirement, Lord Lansdowne stated in the House of Lords that the Anglo-French entente would hardly have been obtainable in its existing shape but for Cromer's high authority among foreign representatives in Egypt.

arrangement with France whereby the capitulations might be abolished Egyptian finance was then in a flourishing condition, but owing to the international fetters imposed on Egypt the country was unable to derive any real profit from the surplus funds which, save for these artificial obstructions, would have been available. The position had, in fact, become intolerable. It was determined to make an effort to improve it, and a high Egyptian official, Tigrane Pasha, was sent from Egypt on a special mission to London and Paris in order to ascertain the terms on which a new arrangement of Egyptian finance could be maintained. Simultaneously, responsible Frenchmen had come to the conclusion that it was practically impossible for the British government to redeem the pledge to evacuate Egypt, which had been over-hastily given in 1882. They were to some extent mollified by the consideration shown for French interests in Egypt, and recognised that the policy of "pinpricks," which had lasted for twenty years, was of no real benefit to France, and might even endanger the peace of Europe. British responses were therefore met in a friendly spirit, though naturally some compensation was expected for any concession made in Egypt, and it was suggested that this might be found in granting France a free hand in Morocco, where a policy of acquiescence in the progress of French influence, under proper safeguards, seemed to be dictated by the interests of both countries. The idea of extending the agreement to the settlement of various other questions, which had for a long time served as constant sources of irritation, was a very obvious and natural corollary, and Morocco came under the scope of the discussion.

The prudence of maintaining friendly relations with the Sultan of Morocco had long been recognised by the King and Lord Lansdowne, yet Morocco's position in regard to the international rivalries of Europe abounded in irony. The government of that country had long been distracted by civil war. The natives of the interior were in chronic rebellion against the rule of the Sultan at Fez, while the French, as the rulers of the neighbouring province of Algiers, were in frequent conflict with the Moorish settlements near their frontier, and claimed a predominant interest in the pacification and good government of Morocco. France was clearly pursuing a policy of encroachment on Moroccan independence, which did not meet with European approval.

British commercial interests in Morocco were substantial, and the French policy of expansion there was at first viewed with suspicion. Germany's interest in the country was admittedly insignificant, but Great Britain's anxiety to check the French advance suggested both to British and German statesmen a combination which should thwart effectively French Moroccan ambitions, but, as we have seen, that intention was frustrated by Germany's "policy of reserve."

Meanwhile, in June 1901 the Moroccan government sent missions to the Powers mainly to seek relief from the French encroachments. The mission to England, which consisted of Kaid el Mehedi el Meneblie, the War Minister, and Kaid Maclean, the Scottish Commander-in-Chief in the Moroccan service, visited King Edward on 10th June, and congratulated him on his accession. After a tour in the provinces the mission was again received in audience by the King, who gave a G.C.B. for conveyance to the Sultan, and conferred the G.C.M.G. on El Mehedi and a K.C.M.G. on Kaid Maclean.

The Mission was frankly an assertion of Moroccan independence. Sir Arthur Nicolson, British minister at Tangier, who accompanied it, was active against France, and suggested to Baron von Eckardstein, on Lord Lansdowne's behalf, an Anglo-German agreement for the peaceful penetration of Morocco while maintaining its independence. The same Mission visited Berlin in July, where it was received by the Kaiser, whilst another Mission under Sidi Abd-ul-Krim ben Sliman went to Paris and St. Petersburg to protest against the French raids from Algiers.

Soon after this the English attitude to Morocco completely changed, and England discovered that on a recognition of French claims a general entente could be based. A year later, in September 1902, Kaid Sir Harry Maclean, who was completely in the Sultan's confidence, arrived in England with a letter from the Sultan to King Edward. The Kaid hoped to raise a loan in England with a view to developing Morocco's mineral resources. He carried with him a second autograph letter from the Sultan to the Kaiser, also soliciting favours for his country. The Sultan was anxious that England should join Germany in guaranteeing the integrity of Morocco for a term of seven years, and Maclean, who regarded German trade as the dominant factor in the affairs of Morocco, told the King's secretary that only if the King were

unable to help and protect the Sultan would he deliver the letter from his master to the Kaiser in Berlin. Lord Lansdowne warned the King to treat Maclean with reserve. "The Moors are springing mines upon us," he wrote (September 27, 1902), and urged him to give Maclean no advice as to whether he should proceed to Berlin to consult the Kaiser. The King consented to receive the Kaid at Balmoral only on condition that he should not raise the issue of an approach to the Kaiser, and the interview thus became one of personal courtesies only.

Early in 1903 M. Cambon discussed with Lord Lansdowne the future of Morocco, and the rumour ran in Paris that the British Foreign Minister had admitted the paramount interest of France in that country. On 25th February 1903 the King wrote to inquire into the truth of this rumour and whether the question of partitioning Morocco between France and Spain had been discussed. Lord Lansdowne replied on 7th March, referring at length to his conversations with M. Cambon, and indicated M. Cambon's wish that England should arrange a partition of Morocco between France and Spain.

Meanwhile a Moorish loan of 7,500,000 francs had been raised by permission of the French government in Paris, but the warfare continued, and it was clear that outside interference could alone ensure peace, though the Cambon-Lansdowne conversations had as yet done little to clear the air.

III

For the moment the projected entente seemed to have lapsed. But King Edward was determined to help it on to the maximum of his ability. Early in 1903 he decided, on his own initiative, to undertake a European tour in the spring, the itinerary of which was of his own devising. Details were communicated to his ministers only after his general plan was formed.

Queen Victoria had, throughout her long reign, paid only one official visit to a foreign court, and that was as long ago as 1855, when she was the guest in Paris of the Emperor Napoleon III. It was in a private capacity that she went not infrequently to Germany to stay with her kinsfolk, and her visits to Switzerland, Southern France, or Italy in her later years were in the interest of health. Such experiences were quietly informal and knew

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nothing of the elaboration of state ceremonial. King Edward's visits to continental Europe took a wholly different shape. They were as a rule diplomatic progresses, and he was received by foreign monarchs with all the dignified formalities that accorded with his high rank. The practice was congenial to him and agreed with the love of foreign travel which he had cherished assiduously from boyhood. Before his accession he had paid visits, often several times a year, to Paris and the south of France. He had become a familiar figure in many parts of Germany, Austria, and Belgium; he had paid several visits to Russia, Rumania, Turkey, and Greece, while Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, and Portugal had all fallen within the limits of occasional tours. He was the best-travelled Prince of his epoch, and his journeys as King pursued the tradition of earlier years. The example of his nephew the Kaiser doubtless stimulated his resolve when King to give his old predilection continued and more dignified scope. The Kaiser, immediately after his accession, had, in all the panoply of state, paid on his own initiative visits to all the Courts of Europe, and had followed these up by many tours in which he sought not only to satisfy his restless energy but also to enhance the prestige of himself and his country. To whatever cause King Edward's foreign tours may be attributed, whether to emulation of the Kaiser, which is doubtful, or to his own *wanderlust*, or to his desire to oil the creaking wheels of the diplomatic carriage, they clearly had the effect of extending conspicuously the influence of his personality on Europe and correspondingly of reducing materially the influence which his nephew had previously asserted on European sentiment. The Kaiser keenly felt the competition and resentfully came to recognise that he lacked his uncle's art of favourably impressing foreign peoples.

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The King's first foreign tour, which took place in the spring of 1903, owed its origin to a wish to return, in accordance with well-recognised etiquette, the King of Portugal's visits to England at the time of Queen Victoria's funeral and in the November of 1902. His first step was confidentially to consult his friend the Portuguese minister, the Marquis de Soveral, who successfully urged that Lisbon should have priority as the King's first royal port of call. The general design was a Mediterranean cruise in his yacht the *Victoria and Albert*, with a visit *en route* to his friend and

distant kinsman at Lisbon, and a call of courtesy on the King of Italy on the return journey overland Finally the King determined to bring the tour to a close with a few days' stay in Paris. The ministry acquiesced in the King's arrangements, but evinced no enthusiasm for the visit to Paris. Lord Lansdowne expressed doubt, in view of continued displays of hostility to England in the French press and among the French people, whether the King could count on a cordial or even a respectful reception in the French capital. When Lord Lansdowne first spoke of the matter with M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, he described the visit as "quite an informal affair," but M. Cambon replied that "however unofficial it might be, the President of the Republic would at least have to ask the King to dinner," and he promptly reported the King's intention to the Quai d'Orsay.

Two days later Sir Edmund Monson, the British Ambassador in Paris, was somewhat astonished to receive an inquiry from M. Delcassé "as to how the King would wish to be received." Sir Edmund, who was slightly pessimistic as to the wisdom of the proposed visit, at once telegraphed for instructions to King Edward, who answered that he wanted to be received "as officially as possible, and that the more honours that were paid to him, the better it would be." Shortly afterwards M. Cambon left London for Paris "to help in arranging matters." [1]

As had been his custom on his former sojourns abroad, the King was to be attended by only a few members of his household, [2] but in addition to these he invited the Marquis de Soveral, who was now one of his greatest friends. Since the King's illness in 1902 the Marquis had been in the closest contact with the King, even while the King was receiving only the most necessary audiences. Not only the King, but also Queen Alexandra and the Prince and Princess of Wales treated the Marquis as an

[1] M. Cambon's interview with *The Times*, 22nd December 1920.

[2] The King's suite, when travelling, was comparatively small. It usually consisted of two equerries and a physician. Major-General Sir Stanley Clarke long formed part of this little peripatetic Court in his capacity of Chief Equerry and Acting Master of the Household · he was latterly appointed to the office of Clerk-marshal The equerries-in-ordinary, who took it in turns to accompany His Majesty, were Colonel the Hon Harry Legge, Major Frederick Ponsonby or Colonel Sir Arthur Davidson, Captain the Hon Seymour Fortescue, the Hon John Ward, and Colonel George Holford The doctor was either Sir James Reid, who, with the inexhaustible gaiety that delighted the whole Court, was the very personification of the jovial frankness and blunt loyalty of the Scot, or Sir Francis Laking

indispensable friend of the house, and were captivated by his charm of manner.

For the first of many times the King's suite included a Foreign Office representative in the person of the Hon. Charles Hardinge as Minister Plenipotentiary.[1] The King's choice of the Hon. Charles Hardinge as his companion when visiting sovereigns abroad was dictated by the King's personal liking for him and his appreciation of his thorough knowledge of foreign affairs. The King desired to have some one with him to whom he could refer any sovereign or foreign minister who wished to have serious political discussion. For this purpose Hardinge went with him, and acted just as any ambassador would, reporting his conversations to the Foreign Office in the usual way. It was an almost irresistible combination. The King would pave the way by creating a favourable impression, and Hardinge would follow up with conversations on detailed points.

The royal yacht, escorted by the cruisers *Venus* and *Minerva*, left Portsmouth on the evening of 30th March, and reached Lisbon on 2nd April. Here the King met with a brilliant reception. Don Carlos, the King of Portugal, and the Duke of Oporto, his son and heir, approached the English yacht in the state barge, which the King entered and was rowed ashore. Driving together through the city to the Palace of Necessidades, a distance of three miles, the monarchs were greeted with tumultuous cheering. Next day, after excursions to Cintra and to Montserrat, the King received addresses from the two Houses of the Cortes and replied in French with graceful allusions to the ancient alliance between the two countries.[2]

[1] The Hon. Charles Hardinge, younger son of Viscount Hardinge of Lahore, entered the diplomatic service in 1880, and served as secretary at the Embassy in St. Petersburg from 1898 to 1903. From 1903 to 1904 he served at home as Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in succession to Sir Francis Bertie, and in 1904 he went out to St. Petersburg as Ambassador, remaining there till 1906, when he returned to London to succeed Lord Sanderson as Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, a post which he retained for the rest of King Edward's reign. He received the K.C.V.O. in 1904 and was created Baron Hardinge of Penshurst in 1910.

Lady Hardinge was one of Queen Alexandra's ladies-in-waiting. The King had known Lady Hardinge from her childhood, and her charm and intelligence greatly assisted her husband at foreign Courts.

[2] He had carefully studied the history of the old alliance before leaving England, Sir Thomas (afterwards Lord) Sanderson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, having sent him previously copies of all treaties with Portugal.

The well-filled programme included a state banquet, a gala performance at the Opera, a pigeon-shooting match, in which the King of Portugal took part, a bull-fight which was robbed of murderous features, a visit to the Irish Dominican Convent at Bem Successio, where Irish nuns carried on a school for the daughters of the Portuguese nobility, and the reception of deputations of British residents in Lisbon and Oporto. The King also visited the office of the Commercial Association of Lisbon, and received an address from the Associated Chambers of Commerce. Some hint had been given in an unfriendly English newspaper that the King's object was to prepare the way for the acquisition by England of Delagoa Bay, and the suggestion was repeated in the Anglophobe foreign press. The King, speaking again in French, tactfully assured the Chambers of Commerce that the preservation of the colonial possessions of Portugal in their integrity was fully recognised by England.

"Resting," he said, "on the firm basis of an alliance dating from several centuries past, the commercial policy of Portugal and England may be said to have shed a gleam of light and hope upon the darkness of the Middle Ages, and to have been the herald of progress and civilisation in every land and sea where our navigators and travellers, with their characteristic boldness and energy, have penetrated and planted our national flags. The military history of the union of our two flags is one of the most precious and most glorious chapters in the annals of my Empire, and it is my most fervent and cherished hope that, encouraged and strengthened by these glorious traditions, our two countries may, side by side, tread the peaceful path of progress and civilisation, and that by unity of purpose in our commercial policy we may jointly contribute to the further expansion of trade and industry in our respective countries and colonies, the integrity and preservation of which is one of my dearest aims and objects In the achievement of this purpose I know that I may confidently count upon the support and assistance of your beloved Sovereign, my illustrious cousin, the King of Portugal, and of your associated Chambers of Commerce, and I think I may confidently predict that in the peaceful development of civilisation and progress wherever the Portuguese and British flags have been raised, the future history of our two countries presents an even more glorious vista than the history of the past."

At the moment when the King mentioned in his speech "Our respective countries and colonies, the integrity and preservation

of which is one of my dearest aims and objects," he was interrupted for several minutes by a tremendous outburst of cheering from all parts of the hall. At the conclusion of the speech there was a still further demonstration of enthusiasm, the final words of the King being greeted with deafening cheers. Colonial rivalry had threatened the good relations of the two countries some thirteen years before, and the King's tactful phrases were welcomed by the Prime Minister of Portugal, Senhor Ribeiro, as "golden words." In one short speech King Edward had revitalised the oldest of British alliances. The whole five days' visit to Portugal was an uninterrupted ovation for the King, and it was with a feeling of deep satisfaction that he left for Gibraltar.[1]

The King, who had hitherto said little as to the future arrangements for the tour, now began to consider the arrangements for his Paris visit at Lisbon. To the Marquis of Soveral he had entrusted the preparation for the Portuguese tour, while the work of arranging the other visits was distributed between the Hon. Charles Hardinge and Major Frederick Ponsonby.

The news was abroad in Paris early in April, and President Loubet, in an interview with Sir Edmund Monson on 8th April, declared that it "had been welcomed with extreme pleasure in every direction." The President laid stress on the personal popularity which the King had enjoyed in Paris before his accession. "We shall always think of him," he added, "as Prince of Wales." The President, who was planning an official visit to Algiers and Tunis, at once arranged to shorten his tour so as to be home in time to welcome the English sovereign, and, aided by M. Cambon, left no stone unturned to provide for the King an impressive reception. "There can be no question," wrote Sir Edmund Monson, "of the genuineness of the pleasure which the prospect affords to M. Loubet and the French government, and I am convinced that they look forward, as must be the case on the other side of the Channel, to the happiest results from the step which the King has decided on taking."

[1] Eighteen months later the King and Queen of Portugal, at King Edward's invitation, returned the visit. Their visit (November 17–December 9) was another of those many demonstrations which King Edward designed to foster international goodwill. At a banquet in St. George's Hall on 16th November King Edward, in proposing his royal guests' health, laid fresh stress on the friendly relations which had subsisted between Portugal and England for nearly seven centuries, and called attention to the Treaty of Arbitration which had been signed that day.

They realised that it was a sign that the old order was changing From the Revolution of 1689, with but few intermissions, England and France had been persistent enemies The temporary alliance at the time of the Crimean war had been forgotten in the rancour which followed Fashoda and the South African war, but with the coming of King Edward Anglophobia in France began to lessen, and finally disappeared.

IV

From Lisbon the royal yacht with the escort reached Gibraltar in the afternoon of 8th April, and the King's stay there lasted another five days Attended by the Governor, General Sir George White, the King inspected the fortress, reviewed the garrison, and laid the corner-stone of a new dock. To an address of welcome from the Chamber of Commerce he pointed out that more than a quarter of a century had passed since his last visit, and declared his especial satisfaction that the Rock should be the first of any of his overseas possessions to be visited after his accession to the Throne.

Three months earlier, the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Brodrick, had visited Malta and Gibraltar, and had sent the King detailed reports on the fortifications. The King had replied (February 8, 1903):

The King has just received Mr. Brodrick's letter dated "H M.S. *Canopus* near Gibraltar, 27th January 1903." The King is much interested in the account Mr. Brodrick gives of his visit to Malta and of the satisfactory account of the Forts and Barracks which he visited with the Governor, Lord Grenfell, in that Island. The King is glad to hear that the land defences of Malta have been carefully considered by Lord Grenfell.

The physique and marching of the troops of the garrison during the Review held by Lord Grenfell seem to be very satisfactory. . . .

Lord Grenfell's departure from Malta will, the King feels sure, be universally regretted, and he will be a great loss both as Governor and General.

And to further reports he replied:

The King has received and read with great interest Mr. Brodrick's letter of 10th instant with the account of his visit

to Gibraltar. The King is glad to hear that Sir George White considers the Guns on the Rock are well protected, but that the ships in the harbour would be seriously damaged from the enemy's Artillery on the succession of hills, which culminate in the "Queen of Spain's Chair," is a serious matter to contemplate. The happiest solution of the difficulty is to endeavour to remain at peace! The formation of galleries inside the Rock to connect the new Batteries and preserve the Artillery men from the enemy's fire is indeed a very important but at the same time a very costly matter. It is very satisfactory to hear so good an account of the Garrison Regiment which Mr. Brodrick saw on parade, and in order to get them to re-engage after their two years' service, it is an excellent proposal to offer them 3 months' furlough with pay.

It was at Gibraltar that the King suddenly heard of President Loubet's approaching visit to Algiers. A day or two earlier the King's escort had been supplemented by four battleships of the Channel Squadron, under the command of Rear-Admiral Curzon-Howe, and it was on the King's suggestion that the squadron left Gibraltar for Algiers to salute President Loubet on his arrival there on the afternoon of 11th April. This tactful compliment broke the ice, and a cordial message was sent by the President to the King expressing a hope that he might have the honour of seeing the King in the near future to thank him.

The royal yacht, accompanied by the British squadron, which had returned to Gibraltar, now set out for Malta. It was the first time that a British sovereign had visited this island, and on the King's arrival there were impressive demonstrations of loyal enthusiasm on the part of the inhabitants. The King laid the first stone of the new breakwater at the entrance of the grand harbour, and reviewed the military garrison as well as the naval brigade. The King was delighted with the success of his visits, and wrote enthusiastically to Lady Londonderry from Malta (April 20):

I have been having a most successful and enjoyable cruise, with glorious weather, and our transit by sea has been most felicitous. The receptions I met with at Lisbon, Gibraltar, and here were most enthusiastic and satisfying. I have not had much rest on shore, as you can imagine, but the cruise could not help having an official character, and it was interesting to me revisiting places I had not seen since 27 years. The yacht is delightful to live on and we enjoyed the passage from Gibraltar

here—nearly 1000 miles. We have had great doings here of every kind, and to-morrow leave with the whole Fleet and see their manœuvres at sea, which will be a splendid sight. Our destination is Naples, but we may anchor in Sicily *en route* and take a certain number of ships on with us, as the Italian Mediterranean Squadron is to meet us at Naples.

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I am due at Rome on 27th on an official visit to the King and arrive on 1st May at Paris where I am to have also an official reception! The French Jockey Club are going actually to get up a special race meeting for me on the 2nd. I hope to be back in England by the 5th, as I shall go from Cherbourg to Portsmouth.

V

The King left Malta on Tuesday, 21st April, and proceeded to Naples, passing a night, owing to stormy weather, in the Sicilian harbour of Syracuse. At Capri Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador in Rome, and Mr Rolfe, the British Consul at Naples, boarded the royal yacht, and when the vessel was berthed in the military port of Naples the King's visitors included the Duke of the Abruzzi and members of a military mission appointed by the King of Italy, as well as the Crown Prince of Portugal, the German Crown Prince, and Prince Eitel Friedrich. Lord Rosebery was in Naples too, and entertained both the King and the Queen of Portugal, who with her sons was visiting Naples, to lunch at his villa at Posillippo. The King's visit to Naples was formally described as private and unofficial, though on the 26th he entertained the military, naval, and civilian officials of Naples. The next day he left by train for Rome, amid cheering crowds.

At Rome he was met by the King of Italy, the Dukes of Genoa, Aosta, and Abruzzi, as well as the Count of Turin. The streets were artistically decorated, and an enthusiastic welcome was given the King as he drove to the Quirinal. In reply to an address from a delegation of British residents in Rome, whom he received at the British Embassy that afternoon, he recalled the many happy months which he had spent in Rome in youth "for the sake of my education." At an official dinner at the Quirinal, given by the King of Italy in his guest's honour, King Edward spoke confidently of the permanence of the mutual friendship which had so long existed between the two countries :

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We both love liberty and free institutions . . . and have marched together in the paths of civilisation and progress. . . . It is not long since we fought side by side and, although I am confident that another occasion will not present itself, I am certain that we shall always be united for the cause of liberty and civilisation as well as for the universal well-being and the prosperity of all nations.

The little speech at the Palace dinner struck exactly the right note. Sir J. Rennell Rodd, the Councillor of Embassy at Rome, relates that he had been besieged with applications for an advance copy of what the King was going to say, as it was customary on such ceremonial occasions to read a speech which had been carefully prepared. But King Edward could never be induced to follow that practice, and what he said, he explained, would be the expression of his feelings at the moment he rose. The result was that rapid notes had to be taken at the dinner-table so as to reproduce the King's speech as closely as possible for the press.[1]

There was a review of some 20,000 troops on the morning of the 29th in the Piazza d' Armi, a meadow on the right bank of the Tiber, and in the afternoon the King visited the Pope. So far the King's activities had met with the cordial approval of his ministers, but his proposal to visit the Pope during his stay in Italy had caused them no little disquietude. The King had always set his subjects an admirable example of tolerance for religious beliefs other than his own. From boyhood he had been taught by Queen Victoria to treat with respect all creeds, and as sovereign he gave conspicuous proof of his tolerant spirit. It was from no lack of will or energy that he was unable to qualify the traditional denunciation of Roman Catholic belief which he was legally bound to affirm in public on opening his first parliament. Now, on his first visit to Rome in the rôle of King, he insisted on following the precedent of earlier years of paying a visit of courtesy to Pope Leo XIII. at the Vatican.

A year earlier, on 3rd March 1902, the 50th anniversary of the Pontiff's admission to the Cardinalate, King Edward had entrusted an autograph letter of congratulation to the hand of a special envoy, the Earl of Denbigh, a public-spirited Roman Catholic

[1] Sir J. Rennell Rodd's *Social and Diplomatic Memories, 1902–1919.*

who was a member of the King's household At the same time the King was opposed to any undue exaggerations of the Pope's status in England, and raised objection (March 1, 1903) to the procedure of Lord Denbigh when presiding in London at a Roman Catholic banquet, in submitting to the company, in accordance with an old-established practice on such an occasion, the toast of "Pope and King." Lord Denbigh subsequently offered to reverse the toast to "His Majesty the King and His Holiness the Pope." But King Edward deemed that the proposed change of formula failed to satisfy the essential need of the situation. "On any public occasion," he wrote decisively to Lord Denbigh, "the name of the sovereign should come first and alone." [1]

The King's proposal to visit the Pope during his stay in Italy created some nervousness in the cabinet, and on 17th March the Prime Minister declared the step to be impolitic, but as it might seem discourteous for the King to ignore the Pope when in Rome he suggested that the King's Italian sojourn should be confined to Naples or some other port. The Prime Minister urged that, much as he deplored Protestant intolerance, it was unwise to provoke any manifestation of it. For the moment the King acquiesced, though the attitude of the cabinet seemed to him unreasonable in view of the fact that when Prince of Wales he had thrice paid Pope Pius IX. visits of courtesy—on the first two occasions when the Pontiff was temporal sovereign of Rome, and on the third occasion when he was a prisoner in the Vatican and the city had become the capital of the kingdom of Italy. Moreover, as lately as 28th January 1899, the King's brother, the Duke of Connaught, had with the Duchess been received by Pope Leo XIII. In all these cases the few signs of resentment on the part of English Protestants had proved evanescent. Similarly the King's nephew, the Lutheran German Emperor, had twice visited Pope Leo in the early years of his reign—in 1888 and 1892. On the Kaiser's second visit to the Vatican he was accompanied by his wife, and they had come to Rome in order to attend the celebration of the silver wedding of

[1] The question was again raised in April 1925, when the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Alfred Bowen, himself a Roman Catholic, refused to attend a Roman Catholic banquet because the health of the King was not honoured before that of the Pontiff

the King and Queen of Italy : clear proof that any strained relations between the Quirinal and the Vatican formed no valid bar to the payment by a visiting foreign sovereign of a personal courtesy to the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore the venerable Pope Leo XIII., who on 2nd March 1903 had completed his 93rd year, while steadfast in the assertion of the prescriptive rights of his office, was of signally amiable temper and valued royal visits and courtesies.

The King had spoken several times to Hardinge on the way out and at Lisbon about the proposed visit and, although annoyed by the views of the cabinet, seemed fairly reconciled to the idea of not seeing the Pontiff. So much so that when, on arrival at Gibraltar, Hardinge received a telegram from Sir Francis Bertie reporting that Monsignor Stonor had been making inquiries as to whether the King would pay a visit to the Vatican, the King made him send through Sir Francis a message to Monsignor Stonor explaining that, owing to the shortness of the visit to Rome, it would be impossible for him to visit the Pope. But next day there came a long telegram from Mr. Balfour reporting a conversation which he had had with the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Edmund Talbot, in which they had urged the visit. At the same time Hardinge received a private telegram from the Foreign Office suggesting that Mr. Balfour's telegram was intended as a loophole of escape from the actual situation in the event of the King considering an informal visit to the Pope desirable. The King, on seeing these two telegrams, at once changed his attitude, cancelled the message to Monsignor Stonor, and sent a telegram to Mr. Balfour saying that he entirely shared the views put forward by the Duke of Norfolk, and that as he had hitherto invariably when in Rome paid a visit to the Pope the omission to do so on this occasion would undoubtedly be an affront.

Hardinge pointed out to the King that the two telegrams were intended to suggest that, although the cabinet still held the same objections to the King going to see the Pope, they would not mind so much if the King paid the visit on his own responsibility, so that in the event of the question being raised in the House of Commons or elsewhere, the government would be able to shelter themselves behind Mr. Balfour's reply to the Duke of Norfolk. The King, however, made up his mind that he would get a distinct assent from Mr. Balfour for an informal visit to the Pope before

taking any further action, and on 9th April 1903 the King wired Mr. Balfour from Gibraltar :

> King understands arguments of Duke of Norfolk On previous visits to Rome when Prince of Wales invariably visited Pope. Not to do so now would be slight to Pontiff and would alienate Roman Catholic subjects. Recently sent Denbigh, Member of Household, on special mission to Pope. Not to see him when in Rome would look affront. King hopes you will agree.

Balfour did agree to the King's desire to pay a " private and informal visit to the Vatican," the telegram reaching the King just before he left Gibraltar, and it was thereupon decided to visit the Pope after the state visit had been paid to the King of Italy

The King now sent a special message to the Pope assenting with pleasure to the proposed visit. The King announced at the same time that he would start in the Ambassador's carriage from the Embassy, which he regarded as British territory and neutral ground, and would drive straight to the Vatican, other details being left to Hardinge to arrange with Cardinal Rampolla on the King's arrival in Rome. But there were curious diplomatic difficulties yet to be surmounted. Great Britain had at that time no diplomatic representative at the Vatican, and Cardinal Rampolla proposed that the British sovereign should go to the Vatican, not from the British Embassy at the Quirinal, but from the English College. The King, however, did not approve of that arrangement, and for a short time there appeared to be a deadlock. It was only on the intervention of Monsignor Merry del Val that Cardinal Rampolla withdrew his conditions, and the King was informed that he could go to the Vatican starting from whatever point he preferred. Thus King Edward visited the Vatican starting from the British Embassy at the Quirinal.

The meeting between King and Pontiff was most cordial. The Pope, besides expressing his pleasure at seeing the King, thanked him for the hospitality shown to Catholics in England and for the liberty of creed and confession prevailing throughout the British Empire. The King for his part replied with equal compliments and was deeply impressed by the animation of the Pope's talk and the clearness of his voice and faculties in spite of his 93 years. The visit was welcomed by all sections of the

Italian people, and the press comments were wholly favourable.[1] The King had crowned his success at Lisbon by an equal personal success in Rome, where his civilian dress and simple retinue pleased the people by comparison with the helmeted figure amidst an imposing military cavalcade presented by the German Emperor on similar occasions.

From the opening of his reign the Kaiser had indulged his passion for personal display by a spectacular series of visits to foreign Courts, and he cherished the illusion that thereby he was helping to ensure Germany's place in the sun. The Kaiser's foreign tours were, in his own view, efficient contributions to German predominance in the affairs of the world, and King Edward's entry in 1903 on his course of foreign travel clearly perturbed the Kaiser. The King seemed to be taking a leaf out of his book, and the Kaiser resented the flattery of imitation. The King's motives were of a far broader kind than the Kaiser acknowledged, but his nephew deemed it needful to do what he could to counteract King Edward's influence by following closely on his traces. Scarcely had King Edward left Rome in April than the Kaiser appeared there in all the panoply of state, and when, in the autumn, King Edward was the guest of the Emperor Francis Joseph in Vienna, the Kaiser arrived there in formal pomp the week following his uncle's departure. The reception which foreign crowds in the streets gave the two monarchs on their visits proved the justice of popular estimates of their respective characters. King Edward's geniality was irresistible,

[1] On 20th July 1903 Pope Leo XIII. passed away at the age of 93, and on 4th August Cardinal Sarto was elected in his place under the title of Pius X. On the King's initiative, Lord Denbigh represented him at the Mass which was celebrated for the late Pope at Brompton Oratory on 28th July. In August the new Pope wrote to the King announcing his accession to the Pontificate. Lord Lansdowne advised that, in accordance with the precedent set by Queen Victoria, a formal acknowledgement should be sent. The King acquiesced, but the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, through the Duke of Norfolk, desired a more personal action on the King's part, and the King, on second thoughts, "in view of his personal relations with the late Pope and of the practical acts of loyalty, goodwill, and friendliness displayed towards him by the heads of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and by the priests on the occasion of his recent visit to that country," wished either "to write direct to the Pope," or at least to sign a letter of congratulation, while Lord Lansdowne should explain to the Cardinal Secretary the reasons for the King's new course. But Lord Lansdowne's formal letter had been already dispatched and nothing further followed, though the Duke of Norfolk continued to urge some personal recognition of the new Pope by the King.

and there was no mistaking the cordiality of the popular welcome. The Kaiser set himself to show the condescension of a military chieftain, and could count only on demonstrations of respectful curiosity.

There was an equally wide difference between the King's and the Kaiser's intercourse with their foreign hosts. The Kaiser, voluble in speech, assertive in manner, talked without reserve of current political issues, and sought to extract secret information as well as to extort assent to his own point of view. There was no delicacy about his conversation on critical matters of international politics, and he believed in his overbearing methods of persuasion, scarcely conscious of the offence they gave. The Kaiser's efforts to draw the King himself into ill-considered discussion were usually foiled by the King's tactful silence or a courteous remark to the effect that the delicate topic was the business of his ministers rather than his own In such meetings King Edward usually kept well within the confines of purely social courtesy and pleasant personal reminiscence, but his lifelong interest in the personality of men who exercised influence in any direction made talk with the holders of high political office abroad invariably congenial But even with foreign ministers of state the conversation ran on easy lines. He listened attentively, even respectfully, and did not presume in any way on his high position. The fact is that no sovereign in Europe possessed the art of differentiation and the true sense of proportion to the same extent as King Edward. It was a keyboard on which he played with incomparable skill. His smile, the intonation of his voice, his acts, his words—all these were accommodated with infinite delicacy to the person whom he was addressing, to the surroundings in which he found himself. He was more than the right man in the right place: he was the right man in every place. A fine gentleman in the strictest sense of the word, he knew how to remain a king while stooping to intimacy and even familiarity. Particularly during the foreign tour of 1903 did he give everywhere the impression of being *le roi charmeur*. He had captivated Lisbon, had been acclaimed vociferously at Gibraltar and Malta; at Rome he had added even more to his reputation, which had been growing ever since his accession. Europe began to realise that England was peculiarly happy in her sovereign.

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And now, facing one of the most critical episodes of his life, King Edward went to Paris. No one could guess what would happen. As Prince of Wales the King had been a favourite in the French capital, but in the previous ten years the colonial friction between the two nations, culminating in the quarrels over Siam and Fashoda, had repeatedly brought them to the edge of conflict, and afterwards the feeling against England had risen to a pitch of extreme bitterness during the South African war. In the Paris press and theatre and on the boulevards the habit of ridiculing England was still strong. Count von Radolin, the German Ambassador to France, put the situation in a nutshell when he wrote to Count von Bülow on 20th April 1903:

> The nearer we approach towards the day of the King of England's arrival, the more energetically do the nationalist papers oppose an Anglo-French alliance. . . .
>
> From my own observations I had gained the impression that the journey of King Edward will lead to a *détente* in the up-to-now not very favourable relations between France and England at which they aim strongly at the Quai d'Orsay, and that France still holds fast now, as before, in the first line to a Russian alliance.
>
> The general impression is this: "King Edward will be given a courtly and a brilliant reception, but it will not come up to the same inspired enthusiasm as was witnessed during the visit of the Tsar." [1]

On 1st May 1903 King Edward arrived at Paris. At Dijon he had been joined by Sir Edmund Monson, the British Ambassador, who had put him *au courant* with events in the French capital. At the Bois de Boulogne station in Paris all the great dignitaries of the state were assembled to do the King honour. The King and M. Loubet took their seats in the President's state carriage, which, followed by a long procession of other carriages and escorted by a strong body of cuirassiers, drove up the Avenue and down the Champs-Élysées to the British Embassy in the Faubourg St. Honoré. The King was dressed in a scarlet uniform, the brilliancy of which threw into relief his beard, still fair, though commencing to turn grey. He seemed rather pale.

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xviii. p. 482.

The crowd was for the most part sullenly respectful in its demeanour, but cries were heard of "Vivent les Boers," "Vive Marchand," and "Vive Fashoda"—much to the discomfiture of M. Delcassé, who was driving with Sir Charles Hardinge in the carriage immediately following the King's A few hats were doffed, and there were a few acclamations. The King turned now to the right, now to the left, returning the salutes in a punctilious manner, smiling whenever he was cheered. One divined his carefulness to neglect nothing, to reply to all. He at least was determined to be pleased. Sir Francis Laking, who accompanied the King as medical attendant, reported that on arrival the King did not have a very good reception. His suite especially was booed Some one noticing this remarked to the King, "The French don't like us," and the King characteristically replied, "Why should they?"

M. Loubet drove back to the Élysée, and the King quickly followed to pay the head of the Republic a state visit at his official residence. The King, who was in his most gracious humour, expressed his desire for an introduction to Mme. Loubet. On returning to the Embassy the King made his first public pronouncement In reply to a deputation of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, he delivered a speech couched in the happiest vein:

"It is hardly necessary," he said, "for me to say with what sincere pleasure I find myself once more in Paris, which, as you know, I have very frequently visited in the past with a pleasure that continually increases, with an affection strengthened by old and happy associations that time can never efface. . . .

"The days of conflict between the two countries are, I trust, happily over, and I hope that future historians, in alluding to Anglo-French relations in the present century, may be able to record only a friendly rivalry in the field of commercial and industrial developments, and that in the future, as in the past, England and France may be regarded as the champions and pioneers of peaceful progress and civilisation and as the homes of all that is best and noblest in literature, art, and science.

"A Divine Providence has designed that France should be our near neighbour, and, I hope, always a dear friend. There are no two countries in the world whose mutual prosperity is more dependent on each other. There may have been misunderstandings and causes of dissension in the past, but all such differences are, I believe, happily removed and forgotten, and I trust that

the friendship and admiration which we all feel for the French nation and their glorious traditions may in the near future develop into a sentiment of the warmest affection and attachment between the peoples of the two countries. The achievement of this aim is my constant desire, and, gentlemen, I count upon your institution and each of its members severally who reside in this beautiful city and enjoy the hospitality of the French Republic to aid and assist me in the attainment of this object."

The reports of the speech in the Paris press profoundly affected French sentiment; the reference to the King's early associations with the French capital was warmly welcomed, and the coolness which had marked in the morning the popular reception was converted that evening into something like enthusiasm.

In the evening, after a small dinner at the Embassy, the King, accompanied by his suite, went to the Théâtre Français, where Donnay's play *L'Autre Danger* was being given at the King's desire. The President and Mme. Loubet were also present. The house was full, but the public were icy. During the entr'acte the King designedly left the loge. He was intent on mingling with this almost hostile crowd and winning it to his side. In the lobby he by chance espied a great and charming artiste whom he had seen act in England. Holding out his hand he said, "Oh, Mademoiselle, I remember how I applauded you in London. You personified there all the grace, all the esprit of France." [1] The words were heard, and spread, as words do in Paris. They struck home. The King had again found the right thing to say and do. The ice was broken. The people knew that the Prince of Wales loved Paris: they had just discovered in a chance remark to a theatrical star that the King of England was determined to be the friend of France. The extreme Nationalists, however, remained unconverted, and continued to punctuate the general applause in the press and in the streets with disrespectful remarks. But the more reputable members of that party gave proofs of resentment of their comrades' virulence.

The next day a review of 18,000 men of all arms was held in the King's honour at Vincennes and was followed by a reception at the Hôtel de Ville. To reach Vincennes Edward VII. had to cross the poorer quarters of Paris. As he passed the cheering was much stronger and warmer than it had been the day before

[1] Letter in *The Times*, 10th May 1922.

in the Champs-Élysées. Already the people of Paris were half won. The scrupulous manner in which he gave a military salute to every flag during the passage of the procession was particularly noticed. At the Hôtel de Ville he spoke only a few words, but they were full of kindliness. "I shall never forget my visit to your charming city," he said, "and I can assure you it is with the greatest pleasure that I return each time to Paris, where I am treated exactly as if I were at home."[1] The happily phrased words again strongly appealed to the chivalrous spirit of the French nation

After the review the King entertained at the Embassy some friends of old standing, including Prince d'Arenberg, Duc de la Force, General Galliffet, the Marquis and Marquise de Jaucourt, Mr. and Mrs Standish, Prince Mohamed Ali, and Admiral Duperré. For General Galliffet in particular he cherished a most indulgent fellow-feeling, and allowed him that liberty of language and frankness of opinion which constituted one of the most picturesque features in the personality of that gallant knight-errant, who was a living and most attractive personification of the heroic times and glorious idylls of old. The King loved his sparkling wit and his chivalrous character.[2]

In the afternoon the King drove out to Longchamps to attend a race meeting specially arranged by the Jockey Club. In the evening there was a state banquet at the Élysée, where the President and the King exchanged professions of steadily growing friendship on behalf of their respective countries. It seemed as if the King had reserved for this ceremonial banquet his most decisive words. "I am glad," he said in reply to M. Loubet, "of this occasion, which will strengthen the bonds of friendship and contribute to the friendship of our two countries in their common interest. Our great desire is that we may march together in the path of civilisation and peace."

[1] When King George V., in April 1914, visited Paris as the guest of the French Republic, by way of celebrating the tenth aniversary of the Entente, the President of the Municipal Council, when welcoming King George and Queen Mary to the Hôtel de Ville, referred to King Edward as "the best friend of France, the most accomplished of Parisians, whose impressive voice proclaimed on the same spot eleven years ago his love for Paris in the words that there 'he always felt at home.'"

[2] Other Parisian friends of the King were the Marquis du Lau, the Marquis and Marquise de Breteuil, the Marquis and Marquise de Ganay, and M. Édouard Detaille, the great painter, whose studio the King never failed to visit.

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This word "friendship," uttered for the second time, and on a solemn occasion, bore a meaning that it was impossible to mistake. The Parisian crowd, so quick to understand, had already grasped the fact that this royal visit was not an act of meaningless courtesy which would bear no fruit. Rapidly men had seized its whole significance, and Paris was decidedly and entirely captivated by her royal guest.

A gala performance at the Opera; a luncheon given by M. Delcassé at the Foreign Office; a dinner at the British Embassy to the President, the leading members of the government and the foreign ambassadors, brought the visit to a close, and on Monday 4th May the President escorted the King from the British Embassy to the Gare des Invalides, where the royal train started for Cherbourg. The route was lined with a madly enthusiastic crowd, and where before there had been cries of "Vivent les Boers," there now arose the cry "Vive notre Roi." On leaving for Portsmouth next morning the King telegraphed to M. Loubet his warmest thanks at his friendly reception, which left on his mind "an ineffaceable impression." [1]

The British Ambassador in Paris reported to the Foreign Office that the success of the visit had exceeded all expectations, largely owing to the King's personal charm of speech and manner, and his cheerful readiness to play a full part in an overcharged programme of functions.[2] Every day the current of public feeling had set more and more strongly in the King's favour, until it completely drowned the puny remonstrances of the malcontents.

M. Loubet confided to Sir Edmund Monson that the event would have important influence on the future, and M. Delcassé not only communicated to the *Figaro* an article to the same effect, but induced Sir Edmund to break his rule against submitting to interviews and to communicate to a reporter of the same paper his impression that the French public abounded in genuine good feeling for the country which it had unfortunately been the tradition to call enemy. On well-nigh every side were heard

[1] Before the King left, M. Combes, the Prime Minister; M. Delcassé, the Foreign Minister; M. Cambon, the French Ambassador in London; M. Deville, President of the Municipal Council; M. de Selves, Prefect of Police; Admiral Fournier, and General de la Croix, were created honorary Knights Grand Cross of the Victorian Order.

[2] Private information from Lord Hardinge of Penshurst.

expressions of gratification that the King had renewed the ties of mutual liking which had bound him to France while he was as yet heir to the British Crown. But perhaps the best account is the report from a Belgian representative in Paris which was circulated by the Belgian Foreign Ministry under date 13th May:

The welcome accorded to the King of England by the people of Paris, a trifle reserved at the beginning of King Edward's stay, became subsequently much more sympathetic On two occasions the King had the opportunity of expressing his attitude: during his reception at the Hôtel and later at the Élysée banquet. Each time the King spoke in terms which appear to express his thoughts clearly and to define the aim of his visit: His Majesty spoke of "rapprochement," and it is indeed a rapprochement that has been effected between France and Great Britain.

Every class of the population is glad to see the friendship of France sought by a great neighbouring nation, without this improvement in international relations leading to a weakening of the alliance with Russia. That at any rate is how the question is regarded in Paris and St. Petersburg. Prince Urussoff (the Russian Ambassador) seems to be very well satisfied with the Anglo-French rapprochement; he is much impressed and does not hide his satisfaction.

It is not quite the same with regard to Germany: a certain reserve is noticeable from that quarter in the comment on the royal visit. This reserve may be explained by the rivalry between two sovereigns working for the same end, namely, to regain the sympathy of an old enemy. The impression produced in France by King Edward VII.'s visit could not be better. Everybody remarked on the sovereign's efforts to obliterate any misunderstandings which might exist between the two countries. His Majesty has been completely successful. Not a word, not an action which was not appropriate to the circumstances and the persons. It is said there that Edward VII. has won the hearts of all the French. Seldom has such a complete change of attitude been seen as that which has taken place in this country during the last fortnight towards England and her Sovereign . . .

Germany alone regarded the cordial reception of King Edward with distrust, and Metternich, the German Ambassador, tackled the query which had been raised as to whether it was not all a blow at Germany. On 2nd June he wrote to Bulow, remarking:

The history of the last ten years has shown that England is not favourable to an alliance with the European continent. It

concludes political alliances with the Amir of Afghanistan, with Japan, with the Sheik of Koweit, with the Sultan of Maskat, with Asiatic and African potentates, but it keeps a free hand on the European continent. . . . The isolation of England, as well as many interests which she had in common with us, have drawn her statesmen for many years towards us. But the dislike of being entangled in continental commerce gained over all other considerations, and the many-sided attempts at an Anglo-German alliance never rose above initial efforts. . . .

The idea of an Anglo-French alliance is the result of a general aversion to Germany. Through Anglo-German differences, the French policy has placed itself on the English side, while she regarded Germany as a dangerous opponent whom she hoped to strike down. Without the Anglo-German estrangement an Anglophil atmosphere in France would be impossible, and M. Delcassé would have had to wait a long time for the fulfilment of his wish. Without the aversion to Germany the English press could not have worked for months towards a reconciliation with France, nor could M. Cambon have made his reconciliatory speeches.

The visit of King Edward to Paris has been a most odd affair, and, as I know for certain, was the result of his own initiative. I am far from assuming at present that King Edward meant to aim a blow at Germany by this visit. But the opinion now on both sides of the Channel was favourable; accordingly it was from his and from his government's standpoint very wise to contribute their part to it and to remove the former barrier. . . .

I am convinced, however, that the English government in the approaching reconciliation with France desires to create no opposition to Germany. It has the satisfaction of having one enemy less, without having to make any sacrifices. By this means it increases its esteem at home and to certain extent adds also to its prestige abroad. Reconciliation with an enemy does not imply quarrelling with a third party. I know, moreover, that the English government does not wish to break its connection with Berlin, but rather to hold that connection tight. It would be strange if it should be otherwise. The reconciliation which depends on the fickle public opinion of France has yet no sure foundation, and political combinations are not to be counted from it. . . .[1]

The "most odd affair" was one of the greatest steps forward in the creation of the Anglo-French entente. Another step was shortly to follow in the return visit to England of President

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xvii. pp. 590-594.

Loubet. It is of great interest to note, in view of the subsequent charge against King Edward that he deliberately set out to "encircle" Germany, that the German Ambassador to England at the time was "far from assuming" that the King's visit to France in 1903 was "meant to aim a blow at Germany."

The Kaiser and political society in Berlin declined to regard the King's visit to Paris and his brilliant reception there as of much political significance. With characteristic blindness Holstein argued that the antagonism between England and Russia was irremovable, and that the rival claims of France and England to influence in Morocco would keep the two countries permanently apart, however friendly their outward gestures. "So, although the Paris visit cannot be considered a very friendly action with regard to Germany, it is not likely to change the grouping of the Powers, which is dictated by force of circumstance and not by the contribution of statesmen"[1] Which shows how far Berlin was from realising the truth! Such prophecies were hopelessly at fault, but there remained an aspect of the King's visit which clearly affronted the sentiment of the Kaiser and his circle in Berlin. Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin, had, in writing to Lord Knollys on 20th March 1903, reflected the feeling of the Kaiser and his Court when he asked for "a hint as to whether the King means to pay a visit to the Emperor this year, and if so when?"

The Kaiser had visited his uncle in the previous November, and no return visit had been paid or promised by the King of England to Germany. Not only France, but also Portugal and Italy, had preceded Germany in receiving the formal courtesies of a ceremonial visit from the King of England, and the Kaiser encouraged the gossip that the action was deliberately intended as a slight to his recent friendly advances.[2]

VII

It is easy to exaggerate the political effect of the exchange of visits of sovereigns and rulers of states. The ceremonial of welcome invariably follows the same lines, and the professions of

[1] Schwertfeger, p. 107.

[2] *Idem*, p. 108, Document 57 Extract from a report from Berlin of 17th May 1903, circulated from Brussels 4th June

friendship which host and guest make to one another differ little in their phraseology and rarely amount to anything more than formal courtesies. On the other hand, their importance may be unduly undervalued. If rulers by their public pronouncements and their hospitalities on such occasions contribute little of themselves to the development of policy, the ministers who ordinarily join their suites have opportunities of familiar intercourse which tend to improve relations between the nations concerned. King Edward had a complete faith in the usefulness of personal intercourse, and attached great importance to return visits of the rulers whose hospitality he enjoyed.

The King of Italy's return visit was postponed for a short time owing to Italian political issues, but on 17th November 1903 the Italian monarch and his Queen arrived at Portsmouth. At Windsor Station King Edward and Queen Alexandra met them and they spent three days at the Castle. There was a state banquet in St. George's Hall on the 18th, and the Lord Mayor entertained them at the Guildhall on the 19th. On the 21st they left for Portsmouth, *en route* for Cherbourg. Signor Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister, accompanied his sovereign, and in conference with Lord Landsowne amicably discussed all questions of common interest to the two countries.

Four months after the King's visit to France President Loubet and M. Delcassé arrived in London to return the King's visit. Every attention was paid to the visitors. Accompanied by the French Foreign Minister, M. Loubet arrived at Victoria Station on Monday 6th July for a four-day visit, and that evening was entertained to a state dinner at Buckingham Palace. "I hope," declared the royal host to M. Loubet, with a warmth unusual on such occasions, "that the welcome you have received to-day has convinced you of the true friendship, indeed I will say the affection, which my country feels for France." The toast of the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall next day was no less cordial. M. Émile Loubet, who came of yeoman stock, and was Prime Minister before he was President of the Republic, was the delight of all who met him in London. His beaming, ruddy face, his pleased smile, and his cheery manner made him a great favourite; and it amused others to see his amusement.

On Wednesday 8th July, after a visit to Windsor Castle, he

attended a review of troops at Aldershot. Every detail of the military programme was personally supervised by the King. The general in command at Aldershot, Sir F. Stopford, was puzzled by the King's directions for the bands to play the "Marseillaise" as well as "God Save the King." The King had insisted (July 7) on the "Marseillaise" being played right through, as "four bars of the 'Marseillaise' is too short . . . It is therefore on all occasions to be played right through, but only six bars of National Anthem are to be played After first general salute on arrival at saluting base and after advance in Review Order at conclusion of Review six bars of National Anthem to be played, followed immediately by the whole of 'Marseillaise,' but when Their Majesties and The President move off the ground on return to Farnborough and the second general salute is given, the whole of the 'Marseillaise' to be played first, followed by six bars of National Anthem."

The visit was a spectacular success, and the King, in reply to the President's farewell message, telegraphed: "It is my most ardent wish that the rapprochement between the two countries may be lasting." It was indeed another step forward on the path of amicable understanding between England and France. During the visit, M. Delcassé, in friendly conversation with Lord Lansdowne, sketched the general outline of a treaty of amity, and in August the complex interests which were involved were discussed in detail by M Paul Cambon and the British Foreign Minister.

Negotiations now proceeded apace. The geographical range of jarring interests which needed adjustment in order to secure perfectly harmonious relations between the two countries was almost world-wide. Conflict of long standing affected the interests of the two countries in Newfoundland and on the Atlantic seaboard there, in the New Hebrides, in the Pacific, Siam and the Malay States, in Asia, and Madagascar in African waters, but in a more perilous degree than elsewhere in Africa, where not only the settlement of Nigeria had caused trouble, but both Egypt and Morocco were acute centres of rivalry.

By the beginning of September the negotiations had gone far enough to justify Lord Lansdowne in drafting a confidential minute for the consideration of the cabinet on the possibilities of reaching an understanding between Great Britain and France,

with precise details as to how it might reasonably be achieved. Apart from Egypt and Morocco, the main principle in Nigeria, the New Hebrides, and Siam was equal influence and rights. In Newfoundland, Great Britain was to get the "Treaty shore."[1] The main accommodation was the concession to France of her well-recognised predominance in Morocco subject to the opening of that country's ports to the trade of all countries and, in exchange for this concession on England's part, the recognition by France of England's claims on Egypt, which Lord Lansdowne considered an "ample compensation," adding the prophetic note: "A good understanding with France would not improbably be the precursor of a better understanding with Russia."

Lord Lansdowne's draft proposal for an agreement which formed part of his minute was read with care by the King and was generally approved, but two corrections which he made in red ink have some significance. In regard to Egypt Lord Lansdowne, while requesting the government of the French Republic to leave the period of the duration of British occupation to the discretion of His Majesty's government, proposed to assure France that "His Majesty's Government have no desire to annex Egypt or, so far as the Powers other than France are concerned, to raise at the moment questions affecting the international position of Great Britain and that country." The King prudently deleted in Lord Lansdowne's draft the words "to annex Egypt or," deeming that a formal annexation of Egypt was better left out of the account. So precise a disclaimer was not essential, and might prove an inconvenience. Lord Lansdowne, however, in the final draft which was adopted on 1st October, submitted the phrase "His Majesty's Government have no desire to alter the political status of Egypt."

In regard to the French treatment of Morocco Lord Lansdowne suggested that the principle of commercial liberty at the open ports should be "absolutely respected," adding the note, "His Majesty's Government attach much importance to this reservation." The King deemed this sentence insufficiently explicit, and

[1] The Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 had provided France with a "Treaty shore" where French fishermen might land and dry their fish. It was a right on which French fishermen set a high value, but it had led to continued disputes with the British Colony.

altered it to read. "His Majesty's Government regard this reservation as absolutely indispensable," a correction which Lord Lansdowne accepted.[1]

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VIII

The way to a friendly understanding between England and France had been paved by a Convention providing that questions of a juridical character or relating to the interpretation of treaties should, if incapable of settlement by diplomatic means, be referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration. "The Convention," wrote Paul Cambon to Sir Thomas Barclay, to whom it was mainly due, "will cut short a quantity of daily difficulties and incidents of which one can never foresee the outcome."[2] This agreement was signed on 14th October 1903, and inaugurated a series of similar agreements on identical lines with Germany (July 1904), and with Sweden, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. But in all cases it was premised that disputes affecting the vital interests, the independence, or the honour of the countries concerned were excluded from the terms. Although the general principle of arbitration received a certain measure of fresh encouragement from these conventions, the important matters which were removed from their purview deprived them of any far-reaching effect, and they failed sensibly to diminish the risks of war.

The world-wide difficulties between France and England hardly admitted of rapid removal. Lord Lansdowne shared the King's confidence in the final issue if goodwill were shown on both sides. The discussions continued through the autumn and winter, and although Newfoundland and Egypt proved refractory themes, satisfactory progress was made by the end of the year. Deadlocks frequently arose over the exchange of territory in distant parts of the world.

The fishery rights which the French claimed in Newfoundland proved an especially troublesome point, and in January 1904 a deadlock was reached with regard to the territorial compensation which England offered France for her abandonment of her interests in Newfoundland. France wanted concessions in Gambia, and

[1] Dr. H. W. V. Temperley's notes from the Foreign Office Archives.

[2] Barclay's *Anglo-French Reminiscences* give an excellent account of the transition from hostility to friendship.

the Los Islands off the West Coast of Africa, opposite the French coast of Senegambia. On 26th February 1904 Mr. Balfour wrote to the King that all could be settled if England gave up Île de Los which commanded Konakry, the capital of French Guinea, a suggestion which roused dissent in the cabinet. On 1st March 1904 the King wrote: "I am delighted that we intend giving Île de Los to France. It is in the first place right that we should do so, and secondly, *more than ever now* we must leave 'no bone of contention' between ourselves and the French Government. I wish Lansdowne could let Spain know privately of it." Spain, indeed, had been suspicious as to the tenor of the conversations, but with the knowledge that her rights were safeguarded she made no protest. The same day Mr. Balfour informed the King that differences between Lansdowne and Cambon had been reduced to so narrow a point that he had every hope of the treaty being brought to a satisfactory conclusion. By the end of March all the outstanding points were cleared up with the exception of Newfoundland, which gave trouble for a few more days. Finally, on 7th April Lord Lansdowne telegraphed to the King, who was at Copenhagen, that he hoped to reach a final agreement with the French Ambassador on the morrow. The next day the King received the welcome news that the Anglo-French agreement was a *fait accompli.*

IX

The negotiations ultimately issued in three separate conventions, which, though of different significance, comprised a single diplomatic instrument. One agreement dealt with Anglo-French interests in Newfoundland and West Africa, another with those in Egypt and Morocco, and a third with those in Siam, Madagascar, and the New Hebrides. The first and last had no bearing on interests other than those of the two signatory Powers. They may fairly be described as strictly local and personal.

The general principle which the Convention followed was the surrender of claims in one or other direction in return for compensation elsewhere. All the claims in question had already caused friction between the two countries which their abrogation on considered terms was calculated finally to remove. By the first agreement the French gave up the Newfoundland "Treaty

shore," but French fishing rights off Newfoundland were acknowledged. By way of compensation for this surrender various territories in western Africa were relinquished by England, including the Los Islands, off French Guinea; the Gambia frontier was modified to give France access to the river Gambia, and a rectification of the frontier of Nigeria improved France's access to Lake Chad. France thus attained 14,000 square miles and uninterrupted access from her territories on the Niger to those on Lake Chad.

The second agreement covered admittedly a wider range. Although in Egypt France alone had interests which approached those of England, all the great European Powers exercised some joint control in minor matters of Egyptian finance, though no other Power was known to attach importance to its very limited rights in this regard. Morocco stood toward the Great Powers in a somewhat different relation Spain, which was separated from its northern coasts by a narrow strip of sea, had for centuries possessed a settlement on the Moroccan Mediterranean littoral and claimed a controlling interest in the fortunes of the country, while Germany had developed trading relations by which she soon set much store. So that the agreement referring to Egypt and Morocco involved Spain and Germany, and to a minor degree other Powers. Here again critical problems were solved satisfactorily. France abandoned well-nigh all her claims to financial control in Egypt, which had been a fruitful source of controversy, and undertook to forbear raising the question of the temporary character of the British occupation. In return for this important concession England recognised the special interests of France in Morocco. The British government promised to place no obstacle in the way of French action in that country with a view to maintaining order and to assisting the Sultan in effecting the reform of his government. There was to be no interference with the treaty rights which Great Britain enjoyed in Morocco under a convention of 1856, and British commerce was to enjoy absolute equality with French commerce for a term of thirty years. France agreed to annex no territory and erect no fortifications on the Moroccan coast in the neighbourhood of the Straits of Gibraltar, and to prevent any other Power from taking similar action. Finally, France undertook to negotiate a complementary convention with Spain whereby the Anglo-French agreement might

be fulfilled without encroaching on any Spanish interests.[1] The principle of commercial liberty in both Egypt and Morocco was fully recognised in the articles, and the free passage of both the Suez Canal and the Straits of Gibraltar was assured.

By the third agreement French rights in the Island of Madagascar were fully recognised by England, and a joint jurisdiction over the New Hebrides, in the Pacific, was set up. The independence of Siam was guaranteed, but France was given predominant influence in the valley of the Mekong, England securing the same position in the valley of the Menam.

X

The King's anxiety to see the negotiations carried through was clearly prompted by his life-long love of France and of the French people, and by his wish to remove all those obstacles to harmonious relations which had seemed of late to be insuperable. The knowledge that an Anglo-French entente could scarcely fail to be uncongenial to his nephew in no way damped his enthusiasm for it, but he did not regard it as a direct challenge to Germany. At most he valued it as a salutary guarantee of the peace of Europe in case the Kaiser's impetuous arrogance and the militarist ambitions of a section of his subjects should endanger it. As soon as the agreement was settled, the King was anxious for publication. With his approval the Foreign Ministers of both France and England gave an early intimation to the German ambassadors in Paris and London respectively of the outcome of the negotiations. On 23rd March 1904 M. Delcassé informed Prince Radolin of the general tenor, and the Prince gave it as his opinion that the arrangement was very natural and perfectly justified. Two days later the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which reflected the views of the German government, announced that the agreement in no way prejudiced Germany's commercial interests in Morocco, and that there was nothing in the articles at which Germany could take umbrage.

[1] In fulfilment of the understanding with England, France brought to a close in October 1904, not without some wrangling, negotiations with Spain for the settlement of the two countries' rival interests in Morocco. France acknowledged a Spanish Protectorate on the Riff littoral, and Spain undertook not to extend her fortifications on the North Atlantic nor to cede any territory there to any other Power than France. See pp. 538-40 *infra*.

On 8th April 1904 Lord Lansdowne and M. Paul Cambon in London signed the Conventions, and the terms were at once made public. Summaries were officially published in Paris the same day and in London the day after. The full documents were published on 12th April with an explanatory dispatch from Lord Lansdowne to the British Ambassador in Paris. The King regretted that Parliament was in recess at the time, as he thought that a parliamentary exposition of the agreements was called for, and on the eve of the signature of the agreement he telegraphed from Copenhagen to Lord Lansdowne :

I sincerely congratulate you on having brought the difficult negotiations to a successful termination. I hope House of Lords may meet at the same time as House of Commons so that you may be able to make statement of arrangement at once.

Lord Lansdowne in reply (April 15) agreed that

it was in some ways unlucky that the signature took place when Parliament was not sitting. In these circumstances an explanation, such as your Majesty had suggested, was impossible, and Lord Lansdowne, therefore, fell back upon an explanatory dispatch. . . .

The Prime Minister announced the settlement to the House of Commons on 14th April, and promised that the assent of Parliament should be invited in the form of a Bill which the government would submit. The King took exception to such procedure on the constitutional ground that "power to cede territory rests with the Crown," and telegraphed to Mr. Balfour (April 15, 1904):

Have not yet seen newspapers but understand that you stated in House of Commons that consent of Parliament was necessary in connection with Anglo-French Agreement. Constitutionally power to cede territory rests with the Crown. Should be glad to hear from you why this statement was made as feel sure you would be careful to safeguard my rights —E.R.

Mr. Balfour promised to have the "whole subject further examined and the result submitted to your Majesty," though he pointed out that his speech was only made after consultation with the Foreign Office and the Law Officers of the Crown. He added that it was "his earnest desire to preserve the prerogative

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intact. From a parliamentary point of view, it would be great advantage to avoid legislation which will occupy valuable time."

That day, April 15, *The Times* in a very strong leading article thought Mr. Balfour had made a mistake. "He had stated in Parliament on the previous day that according to French constitutional custom the agreement must be submitted to the Chamber before being finally ratified, and added, correctly enough, that this was not the constitutional usage in this country." But he went on to lay down that a Bill would be required dealing with portions of the agreement "because, as no doubt Hon. Members are aware, there can be no cession of any territory of His Majesty's without the consent of Parliament." *The Times* pointed out that this was "no casual slip — Mr. Balfour repeated it when the leader of the Opposition called attention to the words in the preamble that the plenipotentiaries made the agreement subject to the approval of their respective Parliaments. Mr. Balfour said there need be no misunderstanding: 'There are portions of the treaty relating to the cession of territory which require the assent of Parliament and there are also provisions in the treaty which require the voting of money by Parliament. Parliament must be consulted on both those points.'" *The Times* said it was, of course, indispensable to the financial arrangements, and might be desirable in this case to obtain the assent of Parliament to other clauses, but so far as they were aware there was no authority for the contention that "there can be no cession . . . without the assent of Parliament." The article continued:

It was strange that a minister of the Crown could fall into such an error, and particularly so that Mr. Balfour should, as he had taken a prominent part in the discussion on the same subject in 1890, when Mr. Gladstone had raised the question over the Anglo-German Agreement Bill of that year. Until then the stream of precedents for the cession of territory, without consent of Parliament, had been practically unbroken. . . .

But it remains, all the same, not a little surprising that the statesman who took so great a part in formulating that doctrine and the necessary limitations of it fourteen years ago (in the case of Heligoland) should now seem to have completely forgotten that it can claim no greater antiquity and that it is largely his own offspring.

The same day (April 15) Lord Knollys telegraphed to the King, who was at Copenhagen:

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Prime Minister in the House of Commons yesterday stated that consent of Parliament is necessary in connection with Anglo-French Agreement for the cession of territory. Constitutionally this is not so, and the power to cede territory rests with the Crown independently of Parliament. It appears to be a mistake that the Crown should surrender this power. Please see leading article in to-day's *Times*.

The King replied (April 16):

I entirely agree with you, and Mr. Balfour has treated me with scant courtesy. . . I have just read the article in yesterday's *Times* this evening. It is a very strong one, and does not tally with A. Balfour's version. He is always so vague that probably he is wrong, but I must insist, if he is, and as a matter of principle, that he *admits* it. Better see him as soon as you get this, as going through Sandringham wastes so much time.

The King, however, reluctantly accepted the Prime Minister's explanation, and with his acceptance one of the last remaining great royal prerogatives, the power to cede territory, was taken over by Parliament.

The Bill for the ratification of the agreement, the Anglo-French Convention Bill, was ultimately introduced in the House of Commons, and was read a second time, on 31st May 1904, without a division Mr. Balfour, the Prime Minister, congratulated the House on the removal of Morocco from the number of Oriental and non-Christian states whose relations with the Great Powers seriously endangered the peace of the world. There was some criticism on the part of Mr. Gibson Bowles, Sir Charles Dilke, and others, but the leaders of the Opposition, Sir Edward Grey and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, strongly approved the arrangement In the House of Lords the Bill rapidly passed through all its stages by the end of the session, August 15. One very powerful voice was raised in protest—Lord Rosebery uttered a serious warning, predicting that sooner or later it must lead to war

In France the Bill ratifying the agreement was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies on 13th November, although dissatisfaction was expressed with the clauses affecting Newfoundland.

The Senate ratified the agreement by 215 votes to 37. There was criticism by reactionaries and Nationalists, but the general sentiment was enthusiastically favourable.[1]

King Edward has often been described as the creator of the Anglo-French entente. The title ignores the originating activity of M. Delcassé, and the diplomatic patience of Lord Lansdowne and M. Cambon, but no doubt is possible that the energetic enthusiasm with which the King welcomed M. Delcassé's suggestion during the second year of his reign and his personal popularity while Prince of Wales with large sections of the French people, which he contrived to revive and develop as King, very efficiently contributed to the realisation of M. Delcassé's hopes.

To M. Delcassé must be given the credit for initiating the Anglo-French entente; to Lord Lansdowne and to M. Cambon must be given the credit for bringing the negotiations to a successful issue; but the credit for influencing public opinion not only in France but also in England in favour of the entente, the credit for lulling the French suspicions of *perfide Albion* and English suspicions of France, the credit for creating an atmosphere in which agreement could be reached, must go to Edward VII. In the absence of the King's active sympathy the governments and peoples of the two countries would probably have come together at a slower pace and with less sincerity. M. Poincaré, while President of the French Republic, happily phrased King Edward's share in the new understanding between France and England when, on his visit to the Guildhall on 25th June 1913, he said:

> Il n'est pas un de mes compatriotes qui ait oublié l'heureuse impulsion donnée en cette occasion décisive par sa Majesté le roi Édouard VII à l'œuvre de concord qui lui a survécu.[2]

[1] Delcassé, in January 1906, in a conversation with Sir Donald Wallace, which Wallace reported to King Edward, said that during his early years of office Germany was desirous of an understanding with France, but no definite terms were offered, and he regarded the approach as a trap. With England he found himself in a position "to conclude a business arrangement on the give-and-take principle." The abandonment of Egypt distressed a good many Frenchmen, "but as practical politicians they had to choose between their Egyptian dreams and the claim to recover some day the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine: as sensible men they chose the latter."

[2] "Not one of my fellow-countrymen has forgotten the happy impetus given on that decisive occasion by His Majesty King Edward VII. to the work of concord which has outlived him."

XI

To the Moroccan Convention there were appended five articles which were for the time kept secret, and were not published to the world until November 1911, eighteen months after King Edward's death Much misrepresentation of the character of these secret articles developed later in Germany and among English writers who were in sympathy with her The general tenor of these additional clauses was to guarantee the fulfilment of the main purposes of the substantive Convention. The first article stipulated that if either government was compelled by force of circumstances to modify its future relations with either Egypt or Morocco, each Power would none the less support the principle of "commercial liberty," and would safeguard the free passage of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Gibraltar. In the second article England disclaimed any intention of making any change in the Constitution of the Egyptian government and its judiciary, but reserved the right to remodel the legislative system on the lines of other civilised countries, France receiving the right of carrying out similar changes in the Moroccan government. Articles 3 and 4 related to Spain. They defined the limits of Moroccan territory which Spain was to receive "whenever the Sultan ceases to exercise authority over it," and they provided at the same time that the Anglo-French agreement would hold good even if Spain declined the arrangement The fifth and last article concerned the management of the Egyptian National Debt.

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The tenor of these secret articles early next year came to German knowledge, and complaint was made that they presumed a virtual annexation of Morocco to France in the absence of any consultation with Germany or any other great Power As long previously as 1880 the Powers[1] had met at Madrid to consider the disturbed condition and misgovernment of Morocco, and had agreed to exercise a joint protection. Some eleven years later Germany had signed a commercial treaty with Morocco. The Kaiser and his ministers took the view that both these arrangements were ignored in the negotiations of England

[1] Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, United States of America, Spain, France, Great Britain, Denmark, Italy, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden and Norway were represented.

with France, and that German interests, if not International Law, were challenged and imperilled.

It was natural enough that these arrangements should be viewed with disfavour at Berlin, for the corner-stone of German diplomacy had for many years been the encouragement both of Anglo-French and of Anglo-Russian dissension. But there was nothing whatever in either of these transactions which involved a menace to Germany. If the German pacific protestations had been true, German diplomatists would have welcomed both the Anglo-French agreements as measures calculated to ensure the peace of Europe. They acted otherwise, and deliberately sought before the next year was out what may be very correctly characterised as *une querelle d'Allemand.*

For the time being, however, the Kaiser professed indifference to the Entente, querulously complaining, contrary to fact, that he had received no previous news of it from England. On 12th April 1904 the German Chancellor, Count von Bülow, spoke in the Reichstag of the Moroccan arrangement, and stated positively that Germany saw no objection in it:

> We know of nothing that should lead us to think that this agreement is directed against any Power whatsoever. What it seems to indicate is an attempt to settle a series of disputes between France and England by means of an amicable understanding.
>
> From the point of view of German interest, we have no objection to make against it. As a matter of fact, we cannot be desirous of a tension between France and England, which would be a danger for the peace of the world, whereas we are sincerely anxious that peace should be maintained.

A report of the speech was sent by Sir Frank Lascelles to the Foreign Office and was forwarded to the King, who noted: "Count Bülow's speech is very satisfactory."

The Kaiser's perverse habit of "wrenching the true cause the false way," which he shared with a number of his fellow-countrymen, led him subsequently to assign to as early a date as the year 1902 the inauguration of a settled policy of encircling Germany with a ring of enemies, with the invention of which he credited King Edward. The ex-Kaiser in his tabular apologia which he entitled "Comparative History, 1878–1914," heads his list of events in England of the year 1902 with this entry:

"Beginning of the English encircling policy against Germany"! The author's intention is to show that British foreign policy, which before the reign of Edward VII. was fairly conciliatory towards Germany, grew steadily hostile after King Edward's accession. The implied suggestion is that British diplomacy, as it developed during the King's reign, was mainly responsible for the outbreak of the European war in August 1914.

In Germany this view was generally adopted and became in all military circles an article of faith the validity of which was unshakeable. The facts of the case give no support whatsoever to this delusion, and its upholders misconceived or underrated completely the ultimate sincerity of the King's devotion to the cause of peace. For years he had been conscious of the horrors which the growth of armaments and the deadly development of scientific implements of war held in store, and he dreaded a conflict of the Great Powers. To take any step which would provoke a European war would be, he declared in conversation with a friend, a crime against humanity which would exceed in heinousness anything known to history. The Germans, however, conceived the theory that every sign of friendliness which the King made in his attitude to other Powers was deliberately designed in a spirit of active hostility to their country.

King Edward's visit to Paris in 1903 and the negotiations between the French and English governments, which issued in the entente of 1904, are the most conspicuous of the visible signs which German writers and their friends have cited in proof of the first movement on King Edward's and his country's part towards the encirclement of Germany. In point of fact, the encircling theory was generated long after the occurrence of the events which it was held later to explain, and it is noteworthy that King Edward, in the two years that followed the signing of the Anglo-French agreement, as in the two years preceding it, did all that he could to ensure friendly relations with Germany.

CHAPTER X

AUSTRIA AND THE BALKANS, 1902–1905

I

In 1902 disturbances in the Balkans awoke ancient memories in the King and his ministers, and excited the public mind. The province of Macedonia, which Great Britain and the leading Powers of Europe had, by the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, left under the control of the Porte on condition that the Porte would reform the local government, was still the prey of Turkish misrule. For a generation it had been the ambition of Bulgaria to incorporate a great part of Macedonia within its own boundaries, and now with Bulgarian connivance, Turkey's Macedonian subjects rebelled, and, in spite of the efforts of Turkish troops, the insurrection continued through most of the year, only subsiding with the winter. Civil war raged throughout the province, which was inhabited by almost as many Greeks and Bulgarians as Turks, and all the parties in the strife resorted to brutal outrages and massacre. Greece, as well as Bulgaria, encouraged the resistance to Turkish violence, and appeals reached Great Britain and the other Great Powers to relieve Macedonia of Turkish misgovernment, and to secure its virtual independence.

The British government, in spite of appeals, determined on a course of unmasterly inactivity—an attitude which annoyed King Edward not a little. He would have liked definite action taken on the part of Great Britain to protect the Macedonians from Turkish misrule, but " evidently Lansdowne," he scathingly remarked on 29th November 1902, " is afraid to do anything, and is as lukewarm as Count Goluchowski " (the Austrian-Hungarian Foreign Minister).

In the following February, Austria and Russia in co-operation presented to the Porte a programme of reforms, but British public opinion, genuinely interested in the fate of the Balkan Christians, was prepared to support measures more drastic than any contemplated by Austria-Hungary and Russia. The sympathy thus publicly expressed had the effect of stimulating the Macedonians to a renewal of the strife, and during the summer and autumn of 1903 the rebellion spread with ever-increasing violence.

II

About the same time as the Macedonian insurrection was spreading to the vilayet of Adrianople, King Edward decided to pay a visit to the lonely and unbending Emperor Francis Joseph, with whom he was on excellent terms. The announcement at once created the greatest interest in Europe, not only because the visit would practically create a precedent, but also because of its possible effect on the Macedonian situation. No reigning English sovereign, it was said, had set foot in Austrian dominions since Richard Cœur de Lion had been seized near Vienna, to be imprisoned a few days later in a Tyrolean castle. The Emperor Francis Joseph had only once met Queen Victoria, and then but for a few minutes at Innsbruck station; apart from this the relations between these two were confined to formal and official civilities. But the King as Prince of Wales had often paid long visits to Austria and Hungary, during which he had been on very friendly terms with the Crown Prince Rudolph, and he now deemed the occasion opportune to revisit the head of the house of Hapsburg.

No sooner had King Edward's visit been fixed for the end of August 1903 than the Tsar decided to visit the Emperor at the end of September, and the German Emperor, not to be outdone, invited himself to Vienna in the middle of September so that he might put in his oar between those of the British and Russian sovereigns.

On 31st August 1903 the Emperor Francis, accompanied by his heir, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, met the King at a railway station at Vienna and received him with marked cordiality as an old and valued friend. Through decorated streets the Emperor and his guest passed to the Hofburg where, at a state banquet in

the evening, the two sovereigns exchanged the customary profession of mutual friendship and the King announced his appointment of the Emperor as a Field-Marshal of the British army. The bestowal of this distinction was on the King's own initiative, and occasioned some comment at home, but in the Austrian Court and military circles it stimulated memories of a past brotherhood in arms, when Prince Eugene in the seventeenth century and Marshal Schwarzenberg in the nineteenth had co-operated on the field with British generals. That the Emperor, who for ten years had been Honorary Colonel of the British 1st King's Dragoon Guards, prized this honour very highly was shown by the fact that on the following morning he telegraphed his greetings to all his brother Field-Marshals in the British Army individually. In the case of such an exceptionally reserved man as the Emperor Francis Joseph this action was most eloquent. The Emperor further showed his personal satisfaction by creating the King an Austro-Hungarian Field-Marshal —an arrangement which allowed him to wear a less unbecoming uniform than the short blue tunic, red trousers, and high boots of the 12th Hussar regiment of which he was Honorary Colonel. It was immediately rumoured in the circles of the initiated that King Edward's extraordinary friendliness for the Austrian Emperor was bound up with his hopes of loosening the Austrian alliance with the German Empire!

During the three days' stay at the Hofburg there were gala performances at the Opera House and the Burg Theatre, and a stag drive at Lobau. King Edward made himself at home in Vienna, and his natural kindness, which was emphasised by his perfect command of the German language, was such that Francis Joseph at once surrendered to the charm of the British King. The King also took the opportunity of having a long conversation with Count Goluchowski, the Austrian Foreign Minister, with whom he talked of the Balkan situation and expressed a hope that England would support the Austro-Russian programme. On taking leave of the Emperor on 3rd September the King invited him to visit England, but the aged monarch declined owing to his uncertain health.

"My visit to Vienna," the King wrote to Lord Lansdowne on 4th September, "went off admirably, and I hope to have an opportunity of seeing you and telling you my conversation

with the Emperor, and also with the King of the Hellenes at Marienbad." Sir Francis Plunkett, the British Ambassador in Vienna, informed Lord Lansdowne that "nothing could have passed off better."

The friendly relations which the King's visit to Vienna had inaugurated between the two Courts led in the interval to other exchanges of courtesy. In April 1904 the Prince and Princess of Wales, to the Emperor's satisfaction, were his guests in Vienna, and two months later the Archduke Frederick was, as the Emperor's representative, King Edward's guest in London. On 8th June the Archduke Frederick was given the G.C.B., and the next morning he handed the King "without any kind of ceremony" the baton of an Austrian Field-Marshal, the King's new rank in the Austrian army. The King directed that a review of the troops at Aldershot should be held on 10th June in the Archduke's honour, and personally supervised the ceremonial details. His son, the Prince of Wales, was to represent him at the review, at which his brother, the Duke of Connaught, who was Inspector-General, was also to be present. The Duke, as the King noted, was to "ride on one side of the Archduke, while the Prince of Wales should ride on the other." Some objection, however, was taken by Mr. Balfour to this suggestion of the King's. The Duke of Connaught had just become Inspector-General under the new Army scheme, and the Prime Minister pointed out that the business character of the office would be obscured if he first appeared in his new capacity in all the ceremonial pomp which belonged to a representative of the sovereign. But the King had his way, and at the march past the Archduke was at the saluting base, with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught slightly behind him. Through the Archduke the King now renewed his invitation to the Emperor to visit England; the Emperor, however, again pleaded that his health prevented him from leaving Austria, but by way of compromise promised to visit the King at Marienbad in the following August.[1]

[1] Not only in the August of 1904, but also in the succeeding year did the King meet the Austrian Emperor. On the second occasion the King broke his journey on his way to Marienbad to visit Francis Joseph at Ischl. Driving together alone next day, King Edward, according to Margutti, pp 259-60, discussed foreign politics with a view to detaching Austria from Germany. The story is quite apocryphal, according to Sir Charles Hardinge. The visit was quite informal. Margutti is also wrong in minor details. See *infra*, p. 267.

The exchange of visits established between the Austrian and British Courts a relationship which was quite unknown in the old days and one which grew ever closer. This was supplemented most skilfully by King Edward's tactful and frequent correspondence with the Emperor.

Before arriving at Vienna the King had heard that the mother of the youthful King of Spain, Queen Christina, might possibly be there during the period of his visit. Inquiry elicited the fact that she would be at Gmünden, but would be delighted to meet the King at Wels. The meeting came off as arranged, and the King's account of it to Lord Lansdowne (September 4) ran :

Before leaving Marienbad I begged Plunkett to ascertain from the Spanish Ambassador whether there was any likelihood of the Queen being at Vienna during my visit there, as I was so anxious to make her acquaintance. The answer was in the negative, but she would be delighted to give me rendezvous at Wels station—about three and a half hours from Vienna. To this I readily assented, and had an interview with Her Majesty yesterday at about 1.30. She was accompanied from Gmünden by her unmarried daughter as well as Duke and Duchess of Cumberland and their children. She was also accompanied by her brother, the Archduke Charles Stephen and Princess Frederica of Hanover. Nothing could be more charming and cordial than she was to me, and said she would at once telegraph to her son, the King, that she had met me. I fully explained the reasons why I found it impossible to visit Madrid this year, which I think (at least I hope so) she quite understood.

Lord Lansdowne replied :

It is satisfactory that Her Majesty should be so well disposed, and it is a relief to know that she has been reassured as to the attitude of this country, which might easily have been misunderstood but for the frank explanation which she has received.

The King's visit to the Austrian Emperor in the August of 1903 was quickly followed by one from the Kaiser and subsequently by one from the Tsar. The Viennese populace contrasted the elaborate precautions taken by soldiers and police to protect the Tsar and the military spectacle arranged for the Kaiser with the complete absence of any guard in the King's case. The Viennese newspaper *Die Zeit* on 2nd October summed up the impression :

The Tsar was in Vienna. One had to stand watch in hand not to miss the historic moment. Out in the suburbs, where Vienna is already Greater Vienna, the Tsar of All the Russias stepped hastily and timidly from his carefully disguised saloon carriage and drove between thousands of soldiers and policemen, who hardly left room for a thin line of spectators, to Schönbrunn, where he strengthened himself at luncheon for his departure. Then away again, between sabres, rifles, and bayonets, to another railway station, away to the hunting district of Mürzsteg, where gendarmes and detectives awaited with quaking hearts the arrival of one of the richest and mightiest rulers of this world, whose life is so hard to protect.

Some weeks ago, another mighty King came to Vienna, a counterpart of the ruler who has just driven by—King Edward VII. of England. The masses streamed to the railway station to see the interesting guest. Through a thick crowd of human beings waving welcome, a crowd not squeezed against the walls by soldiers, this King drove through the streets of our city to the Hofburg. He went everywhere freely and fearlessly, he even allowed himself visits to the Jockey Club—not included in the programme—and suited his acts to his mood as though he were an ordinary mortal.

Then came the Emperor William. Vienna greeted him also heartily in her streets. He also drove in an open carriage through the whole city, and the soldiers who kept the route were more a festive spectacle for the military-minded Kaiser than a protection.

Die Zeit concluded that each visitor got the reception he deserved :

The Englishman is free and without fear of his King, and the King is free and without fear of his people. Therefore, King Edward was not afraid of the Viennese. The Emperor William loves military pomp, but does not fear his foes. When he enters a crowd, the crowd must know who is coming. Guns must thunder, bayonets glitter, and chargers prance His desire is not to be protected, but to be greeted by soldiers when he arrives.

The Tsar, before whom Russians tremble, and who grows pale, at home and abroad, when he sees a gathering of free human beings, who only believes his life safe when it is entrusted to his lackeys and soldiers, he also had his reception.

Three receptions, three systems. A ruler enjoys the freedom and lives the life which he bestows upon his people.

III

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Meanwhile, throughout the continuing Macedonian crisis, the King was constant in his inquiries of the Foreign Office as to effective means of checking the Turkish outrages, and urged sterner measures than formal communications, but Lord Lansdowne deemed it adequate to exert diplomatic pressure on Russia and Austria, as well as on the Porte and Bulgaria. Austria and Russia were now considering a second scheme of reforms in Macedonia, and although public opinion in England, led by Nonconformist Liberals, strongly urged the British government directly to engage in the enterprise, the ministry declined to do more than encourage Austria and Russia to persevere with diplomatic persuasion.

The King took the view that more decisive action on England's part was needed to bring Turkey to action, and on 27th September 1903 he urged that the British Military Attaché in Constantinople should, in spite of Turkish disapproval, be attached to the Turkish forces in Macedonia so as to report at first hand on their movements. In his opinion the British government was bringing insufficient pressure to bear upon the Sultan, and was refraining from stimulating the other signatories to the Berlin Treaty to take effective action in Macedonia and Armenia against Turkish oppression. A few days later he found his views expressed by Canon MacColl, a zealous champion of the Christians under Turkish rule, who wrote strongly in *The Times* (September 25):

. . . There is only one way in which the Sultan can save his Empire. He must surround himself by a rampart of the Christians who are now, or have been, under Ottoman rule. Neither Greece, nor Serbia, nor Bulgaria, nor Rumania, nor Armenia, nor the Christians of Macedonia desire to be under the rule or the sphere of influence of Germany, Austria, or Russia. Let the Sultan give autonomy, under a Christian Governor, to his Christian subjects in Europe and Asia, and let him come to a friendly understanding with the young States which were now under his rule, and he may prolong the existence of the Ottoman Empire indefinitely. He will have the goodwill, at least, of Great Britain and France, who want none of his territories. Let him read the history of the German Empire, especially during the last forty years, and he will find his fate prefigured in the defeat or mutilation or annexation of Denmark, the minor

states of Germany, Austria, and France. It is his turn next. The policy of Germany is to hug and lubricate and then crush and swallow its victims. When Germany has got her big navy and matured her plans and made the Sultan's rule so odious that Christian Europe will cry "Surely anything is better than this"; then the three Empires which now give him a "free hand" in Macedonia, will put him on their political dissecting table and dismember him. He is now playing the game of those who are plotting his ruin, and the chief of them is Germany.

The King read the letter with approval, and telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne on 30th September: "He hopes you have seen Canon MacColl's letter in yesterday's *Times*, which his Majesty thinks is a very practical one." The same day he asked Lord Lansdowne, in view of the apparently increasing seriousness of affairs in Macedonia, that British ships should be sent to the Dardanelles. The step, he added, "would have a very wholesome effect on the Porte, and prove to her that we insist on her carrying out her promised reforms. It would have the best possible effect in England."

Lord Lansdowne replied next day that he did not think it advisable to send warships to the Dardanelles to "coerce" the Porte, which led the King to reply (October 2)

that he never wished to propose that British Ships of War should be sent into Turkish Waters in order to coerce the Porte, but he still thinks that some Naval demonstration might be made which, without attempting to "*coerce*" the Sultan, might have the appearance at home that we were doing something actively (not merely in words) to show that we might eventually be obliged to take stronger measures than to put pressure on the two Powers which, even if any good results from it, must necessarily take some time to effect any benefit.

In saying this, the King believes he is only echoing the general feeling in the country, which he fears will become stronger and stronger, and will shortly get "out of hand," as was the case in 1878. His Majesty notices that in the letter which O'Conor[1] has forwarded from our Military Attaché at Constantinople, the latter states that Lt. von G—— speaks in most depreciatory terms of the Turks and says he was sick of their cruelties and incompetence.

Two days later he telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne:

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[1] The Right Hon Sir N. O'Conor, the British Ambassador at Constantinople.

The King desires me to say he has seen in Saturday's newspapers an account of cruelties committed in Macedonia. They are probably exaggerated, but he nevertheless wishes to point out that unless our Government can do something beyond acting in concert with Austria and Russia, who evidently intend to allow matters to drift, the growing feeling of indignation in England will make it very serious for our Government.

Lord Lansdowne was equally emphatic in his reply (October 5). He hoped the King did not think he was "simply saying ditto to the Austrian and Russian governments," and urged that "we have taken up an attitude of our own," demanding definite improvements, in which he hoped Great Britain would have the support of France and Italy.

But the British government was reluctant to interfere with the action which Austria and Russia were contemplating. In October, at the meeting of the Tsar with the Emperor of Austria at Mürsteg (September 30 to October 2, 1903), an elaborate scheme of reform of the Macedonian government was drafted and was accepted "in principle" by the Porte in October. The arrangement confined the supervision of the reforms solely to these two Powers, although the gendarmerie should be reorganised by officers of all the Great Powers and should carry international authority. Much negotiation followed with the Porte and some improvement in the government of Macedonia was effected, but the measures which were taken fell far below the needs of the situation, although peace was for the time maintained. Thanks to the insistence of Lord Lansdowne, Macedonia gradually ceased to be an Austrian preserve—a development not contemplated when the "February" and the "Mürsteg" programmes were issued. Their object, as Count Goluchowski declared on 14th December 1903, was to withdraw Balkan affairs from the control of "the cumbrous apparatus of the European Concert" and to place them in the hands of two Powers, Austria-Hungary and Russia, on the basis of a mandate to be obtained from the signatories of the Berlin Treaty 1878. Indeed the diplomatic history of the Macedonian reforms was largely a record of an unsuccessful Austro-Russian attempt to secure control of the Balkans.

The suggestion of a European Congress to settle Turkey's difficulties with Macedonia and other of her disaffected provinces met with little support from the King. He admitted, writing on

23rd February 1904, that "the situation in the Balkans" could "hardly be worse," but added:

"It is far too late to entertain such an idea (as a Congress). Continual pressure being put on the Porte to fulfil its engagements is the only remedy Diplomatic action up till now has proved fruitless to induce the Porte to act up to its promises." He agreed to the sounding of the French government as to whether they would join a conference of ambassadors "but retained the opinion that a conference would be of no use and only cause a waste of precious time."

Lord Lansdowne, however (February 23), though "very much concerned at the King's minute," considered

it most important that we should work with Italy and France in this matter, and an understanding with them is a necessary preliminary to any Conference of the Signatory Powers which may become inevitable notwithstanding His Majesty's objection to this mode of putting pressure upon Turkey. Lord Lansdowne's own idea is that a Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople or elsewhere may be sufficient, and there are many precedents for such meetings.

IV

Matters hardly improved in the months that followed. Very slow progress was made with the reform in Macedonia, and there was renewed impatience in both Greece and Bulgaria with the manifest reluctance of the Porte to mend its ways. Russia and Austria seemed to make little impression. In the autumn of 1904, while at Marienbad, the King had opportunities of discussing the situation with so closely interested parties as the Emperor of Austria and Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, both of whom visited the King during the period of his cure The Emperor advised an increase in the number of British officers in charge of the Macedonian gendarmerie, a suggestion in which the King eagerly concurred. "It would not be advisable," he pointed out to Lord Lansdowne (August 21, 1904) when reporting the conversation, "that Austrian and Russian officers should predominate."

With Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, whom the King found "so clever and witty that he is a most agreeable companion," the King was now on excellent terms. The change in their relation-

ships was sudden. Years earlier there had been no one among the European princes whom King Edward had more detested —and for various reasons. Although Prince Ferdinand belonged to the King's family circle (his father, Prince Augustus of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, being first cousin to both of King Edward's parents, and his mother, Princess Clementine, the daughter of Louis-Philippe of France, being a great favourite at the British Court), his affected manner, biting tongue, and love of intrigue had hardly made him popular, while his ambitious cleverness excited their distrust. As the successor to the Bulgarian throne in 1887 he had replaced Prince Alexander of Battenberg, a cherished favourite of Queen Victoria, and his accession was viewed by the British royal family as the act of an unscrupulous political adventurer. Nor had matters improved in the intervening years. Always fussily assertive of his rights, he complained bitterly of the precedence accorded him at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897, when he was given a place as a cadet of the Saxe-Coburg House and not as a reigning Prince. At the opening of the King's reign his conduct caused the King grave offence. He offered to attend Queen Victoria's funeral on condition that he was accorded the precedence of a reigning Prince, and when he was informed that the occasion was inopportune for raising the question he not only cancelled his visit, but by way of indicating his view of what he described as "a painful episode" he spent the day of Queen Victoria's funeral at Philippopolis in celebrating Prince Boris's birthday with a review and a gala luncheon at which the Russian Minister in Sofia was the chief guest.

King Edward, soon after his accession, recognised the desirability of detaching Bulgaria from Russian influence, but he was reluctant to make conciliatory advances to his cousin. In 1903, when the King entertained at Windsor Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Buchanan, who was proceeding to Sofia to take up the office of British Minister there, he entrusted the new envoy with a somewhat ungenial message to the effect that, while he remembered the lineal tie between them, he could hold out no promise of support until Prince Ferdinand abandoned "his present double-faced policy." Buchanan, however, did what he could to improve the personal relations between King Edward and Prince Ferdinand, who was easily accessible to flattery, with the

result that when the two monarchs met at Marienbad in 1904 the seed of a rapprochement began to germinate.

Prince Ferdinand, who was rendered unusually cordial by the flattery of the King's reception of him, now gave the King the impression that he sincerely wished to maintain peace, although he acknowledged the danger that unless reform marched faster in Macedonia his people might force him into war with the Porte.

The reconciliation between the King and Prince Ferdinand at Marienbad led the King to suggest to Mr. George Buchanan that the Prince should come to England—an invitation which was eagerly accepted. "But tell him only to bring a small suite," was the King's comment "the smaller the Prince, the larger the suite!"[1] The King had rapidly taken stock of his companion, and when, some time later, he introduced Mr. (afterwards Lord) Haldane to him at Marienbad he called him "L'homme le plus fin de l'Europe"—a neat description of "Foxy" Ferdinand.[2]

On 6th March 1905 Prince Ferdinand arrived in England for a week's stay. There followed the usual run of state dinners and diplomatic conversations, and on 7th March Prince Ferdinand was created a G.C.B. and Mr. George Buchanan a K.C.V.O. Buchanan contrived that every attention should be paid the Prince, who acknowledged that it was his first experience of a reception with all the honours fitting to his rank.

The visit naturally caused some alarm at the Porte, and to the formal inquiry from the Turkish Ambassador as to why Prince Ferdinand was visiting England the King replied that he had "met the Prince at Marienbad last summer, and told him he should be glad to see him here if he thought of coming, as I know how anxiously his amiable Mother wished it. On hearing that the Prince was visiting the Emperor at Berlin and President at Paris I invited him to stay a few days with me as my cousin."

At Marienbad in August 1906 the King again met Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and dined with the Prince's mother, Princess Clementine of Saxe-Coburg.[3] Report reached Constantinople that at this dinner the King had expressed himself in

[1] Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia*, vol. i. pp. 67-8.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 83.

[3] The Princess Clementine died next year at Coburg Palace, Vienna. The service there was attended in the King's behalf by Sir Edward Goschen. Prince Ferdinand was deeply touched by the attention

favour of Bulgarian independence, and the gossip was reported to the Foreign Office in London. The King at once authorised a *démenti*.

Meantime, towards the end of 1904, the patience of the King had become exhausted by the Porte's obduracy, and he had reached the conclusion that "reforms in Macedonia will never be carried out in the way wished or hoped for." [1]

V

While the Macedonian problem was still as far from a solution as ever, another event occurred in the Balkans which gravely perturbed the King. On the night of 10th June 1903 the leaders of the military party in Belgrade, who were in league with the Radicals, entered the royal palace and assassinated King Alexander and Queen Draga, as well as the Prime Minister, General Markovitch, the War Minister, Pavlovitch, and other reactionary supporters. A conference of senators and deputies immediately placed a provisional government in power in Belgrade, and proceeded to elect as King Alexander's successor on the throne a rival Prince, Peter Karageorgevitch, who was then in exile at Geneva. The murdered monarch and his wife had been heartily disliked by their subjects, and the new King was welcomed to Belgrade with rejoicings which King Edward described as "in the worst possible taste." The barbarous crime outraged English sentiment, and King Edward was active in protest against any premature condonation. At his instance diplomatic relations with Serbia were promptly broken off, and Sir George Bonham, the British Minister, was recalled. Nor were diplomatic relations restored until the principal regicide officers had been removed from influential positions. Austria and Russia, however, regarded the murder "in a tolerant spirit," and at once showed willingness to recognise the new régime. The King deemed their example one to avoid. "Russia and Austria," the King pointed out (June 13), "are interested countries, and there was no need for England to recognise a Government consisting of assassins."

On 25th June the new King Peter telegraphed to the King of his election by the unanimous votes of the country's lawful

[1] The King to Lord Lansdowne, 23rd November 1904.

representatives, and invited the King's recognition. The King promptly forwarded the telegram to Lord Lansdowne (June 25, 1903), adding :

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It places me in a very difficult position, *vis-à-vis* the other powers. What answer would you advise ? Have sovereigns at Berlin, Madrid, and Constantinople received similar telegrams ? Telegram a clever move.

Five days later the King, after consultation with Lord Lansdowne, replied to King Peter, and the message concluded ·

Whilst expressing my sincere desire that your reign may bring to the people entrusted to your charge the blessings of peace and prosperity, I hope that your Majesty will succeed in restoring the good repute of your country upon which recent events have left so regrettable a stain

" I presume that eventually diplomatic relations will have to be resumed," the King wrote on 7th August 1903, but he had made up his mind that any resumption should be postponed till King Peter had dismissed the regicide officers. King Peter, however, was in no position to take any such course, and the King had justification for his note on 9th January 1904 : "It seems to me that these objectionable officers are the masters of the situation." Captain Kostich, the leader of the assassination, was, to King Edward's expressed disgust, retained as commander of the Palace Guard, and in April 1904 some of the incriminated officers were transferred to new posts which were in effect promotions. The King wrote : " I suppose there was no other way of getting rid of them. Eastern views differ from those of Western nations "

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The question of sending a diplomatic representative to Belgrade was now revived, but the King firmly stated : " We have not the same interests as Austria and should be in no hurry to send a Minister to Belgrade." Nor did his tone change next month when the matter came up again : " Till they know how to behave themselves no British Minister should be sent to Serbia."

In June King Peter's coronation was announced, but there was some uncertainty as to the date, and the King commented : " Far better if coronation was put off indefinitely." Later, on 5th September, he noted : " The Coronation is no doubt a great

mistake in every point of view, and I certainly do not wish to be represented in any way." [1]

Meanwhile a report reached the Foreign Office through Sir Robert Kennedy, the British Minister at Cettinje, that King Peter had informed Prince Danilo that he knew all about the plot to murder his predecessor and was indifferent as to England's attitude. "What a man King Peter must be," scribbled the King on the report, "worthy of a sensational novel."

In October 1904, to the King's annoyance, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria invited King Peter to be his guest in Sofia. King Edward was consulted as to what attitude the British Minister there should assume on the occasion, and the King advised that Buchanan should absent himself from Sofia while King Peter was in the city. This advice was partially followed: Buchanan abstained from taking part in the reception of King Peter and declined the invitation to the official banquet which Prince Ferdinand gave in King Peter's honour. [2]

Meanwhile King Peter and his government made every effort to induce the British government to re-establish diplomatic relations. Chedo Mijatovitch, the able Serbian Minister in London, tried as much as he could, unofficially, to prepare the way for that diplomatic reconciliation, and he was aided by the Russian and Italian Ambassadors. As King Peter was *persona grata* with the Tsar of Russia, and as he was brother-in-law of Queen Helena of Italy, both the Russian and the Italian Ambassadors in London received instructions to exercise their influence with the British government in favour of a speedy re-establishment of the diplomatic relations. But their combined representations were in vain. It would seem that the two Ambassadors received a hint that the true difficulty lay with King Edward, and in the summer of 1905 both Count Benckendorff and Signor Pansa received orders to ask for a special audience from King Edward. He received them at Windsor and listened patiently to their representations, at the end of which he spoke *à peu près* in these terms: "I regret very much indeed that I cannot comply with your suggestions. The assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga was so terrible that it made

[1] The Coronation took place on 21st September. Most other European countries were represented.

[2] Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia*, vol. i. pp. 67-8.

a deep impression on public opinion in England. Public opinion has not yet recovered from the shock, and would certainly not approve of a re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Serbia, and you know well that I and my Government must take into account the public opinion of our country. And, besides this reason, I have another, and, so to say, a personal reason Mon métier à moi est d'être Roi. King Alexander was also by his métier 'un Roi.' As you see, we belonged to the same guild, as labourers or professional men. I cannot be indifferent to the assassination of a member of my profession, or, if you like, a member of my guild. We should be obliged to shut up our businesses if we, the kings, were to consider the assassinations of kings as of no consequence at all. I regret, but you see that I cannot do what you wish me to do." [1]

The British government and the King still held the view that nothing could be done until King Peter removed the regicides from attendance upon him. Lord Lansdowne, on retiring from office 5th December 1905, by the King's direction prepared for him a short memorandum as to the possibilities of renewing diplomatic relations, and on 23rd May 1906 Sir Edward Grey followed this up with a memorandum in which he advised the renewal of diplomatic negotiations "as soon as the five regicide officers named have resigned and an assurance given that they will not be re-employed."

Seven days later the principal regicides were placed on the retired list,[2] and on 13th June diplomatic relations were resumed. Two months later (Sir) James Whitehead, the new British Minister to Belgrade, was received by King Peter.

For three years the King and the British government had steadfastly refused to recognise a government that would not punish men who had been guilty of assassination, and the whole episode was significant of the King's determination not to condone murder.

[1] Edward Legge, *King Edward in his True Colours*, pp. 81-2

[2] Two, however, still remained at the Palace as aides-de-camp.

CHAPTER XI

BELGIUM AND THE CONGO

I

1903

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Among the European sovereigns there was one for whom King Edward had little personal liking—the King of the Belgians. For many years there had been personal alienation between King Edward and his kinsman in Brussels. The scandals of King Leopold's private life and his undignified quarrels with his daughters, combined with his private mercantile speculations in the Congo, had bred lively resentment at the English Court, and had estranged public respect. The barbarous maltreatment of natives by Belgian settlers in the Congo Free State roused in England strong feeling as early as 1900, and in the following years the burning resentment grew as the atrocities were multiplied. Even on the solemn occasion of the funeral of Queen Victoria there were rumours of unworthy personal conduct on the part of the King of the Belgians, with the result that in the following April King Edward let Lord Salisbury know that he was warning the King of the Belgians against coming to England, and expressed his satisfaction that Lord Salisbury, like himself, was seeking to avoid the Belgian sovereign.

During the early years of the reign the breach between the two Kings widened, and King Edward made no concealment of his disapproval of King Leopold's private and public actions, which continued as before. King Leopold vainly offered King Edward explanations with a view to a reconciliation. On 31st October 1903 Sir Edmund Constantine Phipps, the British Minister in Brussels, reported to King Edward the representations that had been made to him on King Leopold's behalf with a view to improving personal relations. King Leopold affected to trace

some of King Edward's animosity to the Sipido affair of 1900, when King Leopold had (so he professed) made every effort to secure the punishment of the King's would-be assassin but had failed.[1] His treatment of his daughter, Princess Stéphanie, "une absolue déséquilibrée," who had made in her father's eyes "un sot mariage" with Count Lónyay, was, he pleaded, totally misunderstood in England by King Edward and his fellow-countrymen. As to the Congo question, was there anything in that to cause an estrangement between the royal relatives, between the two Courts which had been so bound together since the very origin of Belgium? Could a sovereign be rendered directly and personally responsible or answerable for any abuses which defiance of his direct orders and precautions might have perpetuated in a vast enterprise? asked the Belgian King. It was true that he had made wealth out of the Congo Settlement, which was his personal property, but he had spent much of the accruing fortune in his own country, and the Colonial province would pass to his people in due time. King Leopold and his ministers were profoundly concerned "at what they regard as your Majesty's alienation from Belgium and its Sovereign."

But King Edward was immovable. His attitude on the Congo question, as expressed in his secretary's letter to the British Minister at Brussels four days later, was uncompromising: he held

> that the Congo question is not altogether a private matter, but is largely a political and public one, on which everybody in England has expressed an unanimous and strong opinion In this opinion His Majesty entirely agrees with his subjects, and it certainly is not one which is favourable either to the King of the Belgians or to his Ministers. No doubt exists in the minds of the British Public, and I believe also of the British Government, that great cruelties have been committed in the Belgian Congo territory, and the question is so far a private one that the King of the Belgians is held to be in a great measure responsible for them, at all events to an extent that, if he had really wished it, he could have taken steps to mitigate these cruelties, even if he were unable to put an entire stop to them
>
> The King cannot, therefore, feel attracted towards a Sovereign, whether he is a relative or not, who, he considers, has neglected his duty towards humanity.

[1] See Vol. I. pp. 776-80.

With regard to the harsh usage of Princess Stéphanie by her father, whatever her faults and imprudences, the King felt himself at liberty to express his emphatic disapproval, more especially as he was a relative, but he added :

> The King has no wish whatever to cause an estrangement between himself and the King of the Belgians. He remembers old days, and he thinks him also very clever and extremely agreeable, but His Majesty cannot deny that he has noticed of late years certain traits in his character and disposition which in his eyes prevent him from being what he once believed him to be.[1]

Sir Edmund Phipps reported the King's view to King Leopold's ministers, who laid stress on their King's sensitiveness to the slights which he attributed to King Edward, but in general terms expressed a hope of better relations. Phipps now pointed out to the King (November 29) that the British government's protests had lately led to the issue of a decree by the Belgian government imposing the severest penalties on persons guilty of cruelty towards the natives of the Congo. But the King was not to be moved by the mere publication of a decree. It was soon evident that, in spite of the governmental edicts, the grossest barbarities were still being perpetuated in the Congo by the representatives of the King of the Belgians. Whether he were a cousin of his or no, King Edward would not meet a man who was indirectly, if not actually, responsible for cruelties that were a disgrace to European civilisation.

II

In the years that followed, the cruel treatment of the natives by King Leopold's agents caused a powerful agitation in England, but no diplomatic pressure would induce him to introduce a few main reforms. He died when the cruel usage of the African natives had thoroughly discredited him everywhere, and his death, on 17th December 1909, at the Palace Laeken, at the age of 74, ended the long-standing quarrel between the Belgian and English Courts. He was succeeded by his nephew, the surviving son of the Comte de Flandres, who ascended the throne as King Albert.

[1] Lord Knollys to Sir Edmund Constantine Phipps, 3rd November 1903.

Within ten days of King Leopold's death King Edward instructed Sir Arthur Hardinge, who had succeeded Sir Edmund Phipps as the British Minister at Brussels, that "no time should be lost in the resumption of the old friendly relations between the Belgian and British Courts," and he hoped "that better feelings between the two countries would take the place of the mutual suspicion and irritation now prevailing, mainly owing to the question of the Congo."

Sir Arthur Hardinge in reply (December 29) stressed "the intense desire of this Court to resume good relations, both personal and political, with England" He considered the new schemes for the reform of the Congo (which King Leopold had bequeathed by his will to his country), "albeit not perfect, as a serious step in the direction of the requirements of your Majesty's government," and said that it was the new King's wish to go still further. King Albert had already dismissed those members of the royal household who were closely identified with and had financially benefited by the old Congo policy, and was giving early proof of those lofty public aims that were soon to compel the admiration of the whole world. The King, in reply to Sir Arthur Hardinge's letter, sent the warmest congratulations to King Albert, and the suggestion was quickly made that the newly-inspired cordiality between the two Courts should be cemented by an interchange of royal visits. King Albert eagerly assented, but King Edward's absence from England early in 1910 and his subsequent illness and death resulted in the King of the Belgians' visit being deferred until the melancholy occasion of King Edward's funeral.

CHAPTER XII

ANGLO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1901–1905

I

1901 — Ætat. 59

THE diplomatic relations of Russia and England had loomed large in the King's thought from his early boyhood, and during his manhood they had experienced many changes. His political antipathies were very slowly modified by the domestic ties which were formed between the English and Russian royal families, but his old friendship with his brother-in-law, the King of Greece, whose country's ambitions ran counter to those of Russia, rather served to counteract the effect of these new alliances.

The accession to the Russian throne in 1894 of Queen Alexandra's nephew, Nicholas II., who married Queen Victoria's granddaughter, Princess Victoria (Alix) of Hesse, seemed to offer a new and more promising occasion for bringing the two countries into lines of enduring amity, but the foreign offices of St. James's and St. Petersburg were pessimistic, regarding it as inevitable that the interests of the two empires should be antagonistic. Nor was the tension relaxed when Russia, Britain, and other great European Powers were supposed to be acting in alliance in the Far East early in the new century. Russia was vigorously forwarding her ambitious assault on Northern China, in defiance of Great Britain and other countries of Europe, and there seemed little hope of more amicable relations being established between the two countries.

Despite his friendship with the Tsar, the King's old suspicions of the hostile aims of Russian diplomacy were still alive, and he was watching with anxiety Russia's aggressive actions in China. He wrote to Lord Lansdowne on 21st March, 1901:

The state of affairs in China regarding the position of the Russian and our troops seems to me to be very grave, and as if a conflict was imminent. . . .

What is your opinion as to the state of affairs? I fear the Russians have got quite out of hand in China, and that the Emperor seems to have no power whatever, as I am sure the idea of war between our two countries would fill him with horror. . . .

The condition of affairs between Russia and England at that period is perhaps best illustrated by quoting a letter from Lord Salisbury to Canon MacColl dated 6th September, 1901 Lord Salisbury wrote:

I agree—and have long agreed—in the expediency of a closer friendship with Russia. . . .

But the possibility of improving our relations is constantly growing more questionable. Other statesmen are acutely watching the chess board of Europe; they perfectly know that a real sympathy between Russia and England would place the other government powers in a very inferior position. Therefore they will lose no opportunity of hindering such a consummation; and unfortunately they have too many opportunities of doing so, for they can offer enlargement of Russian territory on the Chinese, the Persian, and the Turkish frontier, and we cannot do so. Another insuperable difficulty lies in the attitude of what is called public opinion here. The diplomacy of nations is now conducted quite as much in the letters of special correspondents as in the despatches of the Foreign Office. The result is that there is a new state of irritation between the upper classes in the two countries, which makes any advance on the part of either Government quite impracticable. . . .[1]

Fourteen months later the King succinctly summed up Anglo-Russian relations in a letter to Lord Lansdowne. The Russian Ambassador, Baron de Staal, who had been very popular in English society during his long tenure of the Embassy in London, was about to retire. The King was anxious that his successor, Count Benckendorff, should clearly grasp the points of difference between the two countries with a view to their diminution or removal, and he recommended that Sir Charles Scott, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, should fully explain to Benckendorff, prior to his departure for England, the

[1] Canon MacColl's *Memoirs*, p. 282.

causes of friction. On 31st December 1902 he wrote to Lord Lansdowne:

I have read Sir C. Scott's letter to you of 25th instant with the greatest possible interest. You will, I am sure, agree that it was most desirable for him to have a conversation with Count Benckendorff before the latter comes over here as Ambassador, and to tell him all the different points at issue between us and Russia which will greatly facilitate his first interview with you on the political situation. Scott's letter is the best he has, I think, ever written, and the language he held excellent, neither too much nor too little. Being old friends they could talk over matters with far greater freedom, and I trust truthfulness. Count Benckendorff will not find his task an easy one and I only hope he may be instructed by his Govt. to assure you that Russia will not enter into any new relations with Afghanistan without our consent. The sending an agent at all is most dangerous and I cannot see how we can allow it. How can we also be made to believe that the relations desired will be *non*-political, and solely to deal with local and commercial matters on the Frontier? Would Russia believe in our honesty if we told her we were sending an agent with those instructions? My answer is, *certainly not*. Count Benckendorff's attempt to "explain away" the communication to the *Novoyo Vremya* was not to my mind a success, but he was doubtless told to inform Scott of the excuse which the Govt. made.

No doubt the question of Corea and Japan will lead to great discussion—and China also. In fact I fear that there is hardly a country that exists concerning which England and Russia hold similar views, and both distrust the other. I feel, however, convinced that Count Benckendorff will endeavour to be most friendly and amiable and make a good impression. I ardently trust that he will succeed, but we must be on our guard and above all *firm*, it is the only way I am sure. Russia, like Germany, likes to bully, but when tackled "draws in her horns." In a few hours the year 1902 will be a thing of the past, and in wishing you a happy new year I express the ardent hope that in 1903 we may have peace and prosperity, but I confess that there are heavy clouds over us which I fear will not be easily dispelled.

II

By the end of 1903 it was well recognised by statesmen on both sides of the English Channel that the projected Anglo-French Convention required for its full effect a good under-

standing between Russia and England. Lord Lansdowne and the Hon. Charles Hardinge were at one in perceiving this aspect of affairs, and the King, in spite of his lifelong suspicion of Russia, readily brought his influence to bear. The new Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorff, was the King's guest at Windsor at the end of November 1903, and a day or two later he told Lord Lansdowne that he "had been much impressed by the earnestness of the King's conversation with him in favour of a friendly understanding"

There were, however, many difficulties in the way. The first was the curiously entangled state of European diplomacy. To the casual observer it seemed as if Europe was about to be divided into two camps—Germany, Austria, and Italy *versus* Great Britain, France, and Russia. But France and Italy had already reached a rapprochement, and Russia and Austria had followed suit, deliberately excluding Germany from their negotiations. For the moment it was a moot point as to whether Russia wished for an understanding with Great Britain, especially as she viewed with keen distrust the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Indeed, the most serious obstacle in the way of an Anglo-Russian entente was the growing tension between Russia and Japan.

Through the year 1903 Russia's reluctance to evacuate Manchuria or to recognise by formal convention the independence of China as well as of Corea was threatening an open breach with Japan, and the King watched the situation with intense anxiety. The Kaiser, with his customary duplicity, was urging the Tsar to brook no truculence from Japan, and although the Tsar's official advisers were hopeful of a peaceful accommodation, unofficial counsellors, who had material interests in Russia's predominance in Corea, were persuading him that a conflict with Japan was inevitable if Russian interests were to be permanently established. The British Foreign Office and Sir Charles Scott, the Ambassador in St. Petersburg, in whose efficiency the King had now little faith, nursed the belief that Russia would avoid so hazardous an enterprise.

The King studied with attention the political negotiations between Japan and Russia. Not only did he receive the fullest information from Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, but telegrams from the British Legation at Tokio, which reported in detail the course of the negotiations, were sent promptly by the Foreign

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Office to the King, who returned them with brief pointed comments.[1] A pause in the negotiations in the last weeks of November seemed to the King "a rather serious state of affairs," and a month later (December 19), when Japan offered a conditional recognition of Russia's interests in Manchuria, the King thought that matters had reached a deadlock. On New Year's Day 1904 the King expressed his grave anxieties to the Prime Minister respecting the situation in the Far East.

It looked to him that if France should join Russia in the coming conflict, then we should be bound to take part with Japan. But if France stood out, the King agreed with the Prime Minister, it was only in the improbable contingency that Russia would crush Japan that any question of England's intervention would arise.

Negotiations went forward very slowly, and the Japanese government grew convinced that the Russian government was deliberately pursuing dilatory tactics in order to veil its resolve to maintain its hold on the disputed territory and spheres of influence, and by the opening of 1904 it was clear that Russia was making military and naval preparations on a large scale. The King's speech at the opening of Parliament, 2nd February 1904, briefly referred to the Russo-Japanese negotiations, and gave a general assurance of the British government's willingness to aid in a pacific solution. The King thought that Japan might detect in the sentence some partiality towards Russia, but was reassured. By now the patience of the Japanese government had become exhausted, and being convinced that no hope existed of a peaceable settlement, they announced, on 5th February, through Mr. Kurino, their minister in St. Petersburg, the rupture of diplomatic relations, a step which took the Russian government by surprise. Five days later the Mikado declared war on Russia. The war was due to three principal causes—the rights of the Japanese in Manchuria, the independence of Corea, and the independence of China, all these interests being imperilled by the aggressive actions of Russia. Two days before war was declared,

[1] The King had other sources of information regarding the war and the internal condition of Russia. Sir Donald Wallace was indefatigable in his correspondence, as was Sir Charles Hardinge, the new Ambassador. Colonel Waters, who had been Military Attaché in St. Petersburg from 1893 to 1898, was attached to the Russian Army in Manchuria in 1904–5, and wrote fully to the King of his experiences.

the Japanese fleet, under Admiral Togo, torpedoed at midnight two Russian battleships and a Russian cruiser which were lying off Port Arthur.

There was some suspicion in St. Petersburg that Great Britain had instigated Japan to resist Russian overtures and to take these drastic steps. With a view to counteracting these suspicions, the King, on 18th February 1904, at Lord Lansdowne's suggestion, sent for Count Benckendorff, who was leaving for Russia, and gave him a message for the Tsar, pointing out that England had "maintained a scrupulously correct attitude," and that the notion that she had instigated Japan or given her direct assistance was an unfounded error. Whilst this was true, the King urged on the Prime Minister that every kind of diplomatic countenance and assistance which Japan might reasonably desire should be offered her.

The King took a great interest in all reports concerning the progress of the war. Particularly did he appreciate Captain Troubridge's [1] report on the naval engagements at Port Arthur, to which he added the marginal comment, 17th March 1904 .

> I have never read a more detailed, exhaustive, and interesting an account, with most valuable information for our Navy. It is a thousand pities that Captain Troubridge was ordered home, as his services during the war are invaluable for the experience he gained and the information he could send home.

III

Whilst the Russo-Japanese war grew more bitter and soon began to prove the unsuspected efficiency of Japanese arms, relations between the King and the Tsar, while still outwardly cordial, were somewhat strained by the fact that Britain was Japan's ally and that there was a large section of public opinion in England that looked eagerly for the coming victory of the Japanese. The King, still as eager as before to supplement the Anglo-French entente by an Anglo-Russian understanding, now found a new coadjutor in the person of M. Alexander Isvolsky, the Russian minister who was destined to play such an important part in the subsequent direction of Russian foreign

[1] Captain (afterwards Admiral Sir Ernest) Troubridge was then Naval Attaché at Tokio.

policy. It was in April 1904 that the King and Isvolsky met for the first time. The King had then, in accordance with his yearly practice, arrived at Copenhagen for the congenial occasion of King Christian's birthday. The Tsar, who was usually present at this family gathering, was however absent on this occasion, owing to the war, but the Russian minister was present for the first time, and King Edward took a keen liking to this diplomat of the old school whose political education had received its final touches from Prince Gortshakoff. Isvolsky's fashionable airs, his diplomatic monocle, his precious phraseology, oracular utterances and epigrammatic remarks often repelled new acquaintances, and even some of his friends pictured him as a self-centred pompous *petit-maître* who lacked the essential qualities of statesmanship, and was fitted at most to translate simple ideas into the stately language of diplomacy. Yet he was a man of generous sympathies, of well-balanced judgement, and harmonious temper, whose extreme purism in style and language was but the outcome of a habit of clear thinking. He was a loyal friend and a magnanimous adversary, and throughout his career he maintained a high reputation for honour and integrity.

The King met Isvolsky at luncheon at the British Legation in Copenhagen on 14th April, and after the meal they talked apart for three-quarters of an hour on the political situation, more especially as it touched the relations of Great Britain and Russia. Isvolsky's account of the interview, which he reported to Lamsdorff that day, runs :

Le Roi, qui a reçu ici la nouvelle définitive de la conclusion de l'accord anglo-français, commença par m'exprimer la grande satisfaction qu'il en ressentait et la conviction que cet événement non seulement serait bienfaisant pour l'Angleterre et la France, mais pourrait aussi avoir la plus heureuse influence sur la politique générale. " Puisqu'en y mettant une bonne volonté ' mutuelle,' " me dit Sa Majesté, " on a réussi à régler des litiges qui avaient duré entre l'Angleterre et la France pendant de longues années, cela me donne l'espoir d'arriver par la même méthode à des résultats encore plus importants, c'est-à-dire à une entente analogue avec la Russie, — entente qui a toujours été et continue à être l'objet de mes plus sincères désirs. Le Comte de Benckendorff connaît bien mes idées à ce sujet : j'ai eu tout récemment l'occasion d'en toucher quelques mots à Sa Majesté l'Empereur par le canal du Général Gérard auquel — j'ai été bien heureux

de l'apprendre — on a fait à Pétersbourg l'accueil le plus aimable ; enfin, mon nouvel Ambassadeur, Sir Charles Hardinge, aura pour instructions de s'appliquer à établir les relations les plus cordiales avec le Gouvernement Russe et de rechercher les moyens d'en arriver à un accord complet sur les questions qui nous divisent sur les différents points du globe. Je voudrais que le rapprochement qui s'est fait entre l'Angleterre et la France servît de premier pas et, pour ainsi dire, de pont aboutir à cette autre entente, certainement plus difficile, mais encore plus nécessaire et désirable. En vous parlant ainsi, je compte bien que vous ferez connaître le sens de mes paroles à qui de droit et que vous contribuerez, pour votre part, à confirmer chez vous une juste appréciation de mes intentions."

Je m'empressai de féliciter le Roi sur l'issue des négociations délicates dont le succès — on ne l'ignorait pas — était surtout dû à la haute influence personnelle de Sa Majesté. Je me déclarai entièrement convaincu des avantages qui résulteraient de cet arrangement pour la situation générale ; quant aux paroles de Sa Majesté au sujet d'une entente analogue entre l'Angleterre et la Russie, elles me paraissaient si importantes et si précieuses que je m'efforcerais de les transmettre à Votre Excellence aussi littéralement que possible

Continuant à développer Sa pensée, le Roi vint naturellement à parler de notre guerre avec le Japon, de l'obstacle sérieux que cette guerre opposait à la réalisation de Son projet d'entente avec nous, et de l'intensité du sentiment anti-anglais en Russie. Qualifiant plusieurs fois la guerre Russo-japonaise de "malheureuse" et de "régrettable," Sa Majesté me dit que son gouvernement avait fait tout ce qui était possible pour modérer le Japon, lequel n'avait pas voulu entendre raison et avait demandé à être laissé libre de régler son différend avec nous à sa guise, "mais vous pouvez 'être sûr,'" ajouta Sa Majesté, "que moi et mon gouvernement, nous ne négligerons aucun effort pour localiser la crise et pour en faciliter la prompte solution." Quant à l'excitation de l'opinion publique en Russie, le Roi la trouvait compréhensible ; d'autre part, rien n'avait fait plus de plaisir à Sa Majesté, que de constater tout récemment qu'on avait rendu justice en Russie à l'attitude loyale des marins anglais à l'égard de leurs braves camarades russes à Tchemulpo.

Le roi ayant bien voulu me poser quelques questions sur les impressions que m'avaient laissées trois années de séjour au Japon, je me permis de donner à Sa Majesté quelques aperçus tout personnels sur la situation générale en Extrême-Orient et sur les préliminaires du conflit actuel. Je n'hésitai pas à exprimer, entr'autres, la conviction que l'une des causes principales de cette issue a été l'alliance anglo-japonaise ; le Roi m'ayant

interrompu par la remarque que tel n'avait certainement pas été le but de cette alliance, toute pacifique, et destinée plutôt à contenir le Japon, je répondis que je n'en doutais pas, mais que j'avais pu observer personnellement son effet sur la psychologie des Japonais et constater combien elle a enflammé le parti belliqueux à Tokio et l'a aidé à combattre les résistances des vieux hommes d'État. Je tâchai aussi de démontrer à Sa Majesté que le Japon — à supposer un instant qu'il puisse sortir renforcé de la lutte qu'il a entreprise — deviendrait par son ambition, son esprit d'aventure et son profond sentiment anti-européen, une source de dangers pour tout le monde en Extrême-Orient et, notamment, en Chine. C'est à ce point de vue surtout que le " péril jaune " existe bien réellement, car l'influence grandissante du Japon s'exercera certainement, en fin de compte, au détriment des intérêts européens, sans en excepter ceux de l'Angleterre.

Ce qui précède n'est qu'un résumé fort succinct et certainement très incomplet d'une conversation qui a duré pendant près de trois quarts d'heure et pendant laquelle Sa Majesté est revenue à plusieurs reprises et avec force sur son idée dominante — celle de la nécessité et de la possibilité pratique d'un accord entre l'Angleterre et la Russie sur toutes les questions pendantes. Ce que je ne saurais assez mettre en relief, c'est le ton d'absolue conviction du Roi, ses expressions pleines du plus vif attachement à notre Auguste Maître et d'intérêt pour notre pays, enfin, la bienveillance avec laquelle il a daigné m'écouter et m'encourager à dire toute ma pensée. . . .[1]

The King for his part promptly acquainted Lansdowne with the gist of the interview. Lansdowne in reply (April 15, 1904) thought that

Monsieur Isvolsky's observations to your Majesty are most interesting and important. Lord Lansdowne has always understood that he is regarded as a man who may before long play a conspicuous part in the affairs of his country. Your Majesty's language to M. Isvolsky seems to Lord Lansdowne, if he may venture to say so, to have been most opportune and judicious.

In a subsequent letter (April 16) the King pointed out that Isvolsky

very kindly let me see the dispatch he proposed sending to Count Lamsdorff. I approved of every word, and asked him whether I might have a copy to send you. This he instantly agreed to,

[1] Isvolsky sent a full account of the interview to Count Lamsdorff, but first submitted it to the King, who expressed his entire approval of the contents. (Information from the Russian Archives through the kindness of Baron Meyendorff. See *The Times*, July 1921.)

and I am now sending it to you with a covering letter from M. Demidoff (who I know very well and who was for some years Secretary to the Russian Embassy in London and who is now First Secretary to the Russian Legation here). You will please keep the copy private and only show it to Mr. Balfour. I hope you will not consider anything I said is indiscreet. I confess I do not think so myself, my only object being if possible to find the means of paving the way towards a better understanding with Russia, and, if possible, in time to have "pourparlers" on the vexed questions pending between the two countries. We are leaving here on the 18th for England, and I trust I may have an opportunity of seeing you soon after my return.

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The King had taken a very definite step towards the promotion of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement, and one that was destined to have tremendous results. On his return to England he went fully into the matter with Lord Lansdowne, but the hostility, yet unassuaged, between Russia and England, and the continuance of the Russo-Japanese war, forbade any more definite step being taken for the moment. Several years were to elapse before the King's desire could become a *fait accompli*. Russia had as yet neither a Delcassé nor a Cambon to bring the desire to early fruition, though Isvolsky was to prove a keen ally of King Edward in his desire to overcome Anglo-Russian tension

IV

Russian public opinion had proved indeed very hostile to England in the early days of the Russo-Japanese struggle; but, as the Tsar wrote to the King on 17th April 1904, a more friendly feeling had set in "in the last days owing to sympathy over the *Petropavlovsk* disaster and Admiral Makaroff's death."[1] The tone of the press in both countries had become, the Tsar pointed out, "serious and calm." He warned King Edward that Russia would not tolerate British mediation, and would claim a free hand when the time came to negotiate peace. With unusual feeling he wrote:

Taught by bitter experience in the years 1856 and 1878, there is not a man in the whole of Russia who would tolerate

[1] The Kaiser, too, expressed sympathy with Russia when the battleship *Petropavlovsk* was mined on 13th April and Admiral Makaroff was drowned, with nearly all the crew.

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another country mixing in this affair of ours and Japan's. This seems to be quite just, my dear Uncle Bertie. No one hindered England at the conclusion of her South African War. I hope you won't mind my telling you this so frankly, but I prefer you should hear it privately from me than in any other way.[1]

The King received the Tsar's letter while he was in Dublin, and at once consulted Lord Lansdowne as to the terms of his reply. He proposed sending his answer by the hand of Sir Charles Hardinge, who was about to become British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The King questioned the Tsar's assertion that the terms of peace between Russia and Japan were exclusively a Russian question.

"I do not myself think," he wrote to Lord Lansdowne (April 29, 1904), "that England or the Great Powers generally would approve of Russia entirely settling her differences with Japan when the war is over. The case of England and the Boers is hardly analogous, as it was obvious that no other country had 'spheres of influence' in that part of South Africa; but in the Far East we have, and so have other Powers, great interests. I had already heard of the Emperor's views, which are very natural, but could we, without loss of prestige, allow Russia to make terms with Japan as she considers right without any other country interfering?"

The King feared that his answer to the Tsar, which he looked forward to talking over with Lansdowne, "must be one which he will not like."

Finally the King, after further consultation with Lord Lansdowne, wrote to the Tsar (May 12):

My dear Nicky—I take the opportunity of Sir C. Hardinge taking up his appointment and presenting his credentials to you, to send these lines to thank you for your letter (in answer to mine) which reached me while we were travelling in Ireland. My thoughts are continually with you during the trying times that you must be experiencing.

I am much interested in your statement that you think there may be difficulties when the end of the war is near, or rather when negotiations for peace are opened. You say there is not

[1] In point of fact, an official intimation to the same effect was sent at the same time to Russia's diplomatic representatives abroad.

a man in Russia who would tolerate the intervention of another country in such circumstances. I quite understand this statement, and am strongly of opinion that the interests of peace are rarely served by even the best intentioned offers of intervention unless both belligerents desire it. I should suppose that this would be the general view of *all* the Powers, and that none of them would desire to interfere unasked *unless their existing rights were menaced* by the *proposed terms of peace*, an eventuality which I am sure neither they nor you see any reason to regard as probable.

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It gave me great pleasure to make the acquaintance last month of your Minister at Copenhagen, M. Isvolsky In him you have a man of remarkable intelligence and who is, I am sure, one of your ablest and most devoted servants. I had a long conversation with him at Copenhagen, the substance of which has, I believe, been imparted to you. My earnest desire, which I am convinced you will share, is that at the conclusion of the war our two countries may come to a satisfactory settlement regarding many difficult matters between us, and that a lasting agreement may be arrived at, similar to the one which we have lately concluded with France.

Believe me, my dear Nicky, your very affectionate Uncle,

(Signed) EDWARD R.

The King was leaving no stone unturned to secure better relations between England and Russia, but a month earlier a proposed step on the part of the Russian government threatened to raise again the ancient animosity between the two countries. In April 1904 news had reached London of the Russian government's intention to send the Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles, contrary to treaty obligations. On 23rd April Lord Lansdowne saw M. Cambon, the French Ambassador, and pointed out to him that the relations between Britain and Russia might be strained if that course were pursued. There was a hope that M. Cambon would effectively warn Count Benckendorff of the risk the Russian government would run. But King Edward, in conversation with Sir Charles Hardinge on 22nd April, took another view of the situation. Both Hardinge and the King were of opinion that "there did not appear to be any reason for preventing the passage of the Dardanelles by Russian warships as we have endeavoured to do in the past"; and that "this concession of an unopposed passage might prove a very useful asset in the event of the general negotiations for an

arrangement with Russia being resumed. It would be a useful 'quid pro quo' to have in hand."

Four days later (a fortnight after the signing of the Anglo-French Entente) the King told M. Cambon that he was sincerely anxious for better Anglo-Russian relations. Cambon communicated the King's wish to Sir Edmund Monson, the British Ambassador to Paris, who promptly reported (April 29, 1904):

> The French Ambassador said a few words to me to-day upon the subject of the relations of Great Britain with Russia. He told me that His Majesty the King had expressed to him his earnest desire that those relations should be improved, that, if possible, an agreement should be arrived at for the settlement of the questions which had occasioned friction and misunderstanding between the two governments in the past. His Excellency cordially approved of the idea, but recognised the immense difficulties of giving effect to it, particularly at the present time. . . .
>
> There seemed to me, indeed, to be only one point which might, although I did not think this was likely, give rise to really serious trouble. I referred to the possibility of an attempt on the part of the Russian government to send their Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles. It would be quite impossible for us to acquiesce in such a step, and, if it were taken, we should be driven to meet it by adequate measures, which might render a collision inevitable. We had always insisted upon the view that the passage of the Straits must be denied to Ships of War, and we had on several occasions protested against minor infractions of these Treaty obligations. The passage of the Straits by a Russian Squadron for the purpose of attacking our Ally in the Far East could not therefore be tolerated by this country. I rejoiced, however, to say that, so far as I was aware, there were no signs of any such intention on the part of the Russian government, and I was indeed under the impression that they would be unlikely to send their Ships out of the Black Sea at the present time.[1]

In the event, Russia did send several vessels of her Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles, and their subsequent activities were to call forth from the British Foreign Office a very strong protest which had the King's entire concurrence.

[1] Monson's report of the conversation with Cambon was circulated to the Prince of Wales, as well as the King, Cabinet, Embassies, etc. The inclusion of the Prince of Wales marks a great difference from Queen Victoria's régime. (Foreign Office Archives. Information communicated by Dr. H. W. V. Temperley.)

V

The endeavours which were afoot for a better Anglo-Russian understanding were now aided by the new British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, Sir Charles Hardinge, the great friend of the King, who had accompanied him on his tour of 1903. Sir Charles and Lady Hardinge had a most friendly reception, and he wrote delightedly to Lord Knollys on 25th May 1904:

Will you please tell the King that I have had a most friendly reception from everybody. They all tell me that they are delighted to have us back again, and I have found both the official world and St. Petersburg society equally cordial. I hear on all sides, and the foreign element here corroborates it, that owing to Bena (Lady Hardinge) being one of the Queen's ladies and to my having accompanied His Majesty during his foreign trip last year, my appointment has been regarded as due entirely to the King's initiative, and as a guarantee of peace and of more friendly relations between the two Governments. . .

He added that since his arrival there had not been a single attack upon England in the Russian press, and he thought that the bitterness and hostility towards England that were so apparent two months ago would rapidly subside and eventually disappear.

The Kaiser, however, thought differently, and now sought to alarm the Tsar by inventing rumours of England's intention to propose mediation with Japan. On 6th June 1904 he wrote to the Tsar that Hardinge was sent to St. Petersburg for the express purpose.

"I am sure," he wrote, "England will by times renew her efforts to make proposals to you about mediation—it is, in fact, the special mission of Hardinge, as I know—though you have already so strongly repudiated it, and which is most presuming in the extreme on her part, seeing that the war has only just begun—she is afraid for her money, and wants to get Thibet cheaply—I shall certainly try to dissuade Uncle Bertie as soon as I meet him from harassing you with any more such proposals. Should in the course of events mediation seem advisable to you, it is clear that the first wish for it must come from you, and you may be sure that I shall always be at your disposal!" [1]

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, pp. 118-19. The Tsar's reply is not recorded.

VI

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The meeting between the King and the Kaiser of which the Kaiser spoke took place at Kiel at the end of June. At the end of 1903 it had been suggested that the King should visit the Kaiser in Germany. As Count von Bülow wrote to the Kaiser on 27th December 1903:

> Our feeling towards England has become calmer. Opinion in England is still agitated. But if His Majesty King Edward, who knows his people and public opinion and is not accustomed to flaunt either needlessly, wishes to pay us a visit, the visit will be feasible also from the English point of view. In my opinion we have no political reason for dodging this visit. . . .[1]

In March the King proposed that he should visit the Kaiser in Berlin, but was then diplomatically informed that the Kaiser was recovering from an illness and had to go to the Mediterranean, and it was eventually settled that the King should visit the Kaiser at Kiel. As soon as the King accepted the Kaiser's invitation for a meeting in June he asked Lord Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and Prince Louis of Battenberg to accompany him. Lord Selborne willingly accepted, but stipulated that he should be allowed to decline any German Order which the Kaiser might offer him. The meeting of the two sovereigns excited almost as much interest throughout Europe as the news from the seat of war in the Far East, and the Kaiser for his part supervised in a fidgety manner the smallest details in connection with the visit.

On 23rd June 1904 the King boarded the *Victoria and Albert* yacht and sailed for Kiel, escorted by four cruisers and a flotilla of destroyers. Accompanying him, in addition to the usual entourage, were Baron D'Estournelles de Constant and the Prince of Monaco, whom the King had especially invited in order to counteract any French suspicions of lukewarmness for the Anglo-French Entente. The Kaiser for his part was supported, in addition to the usual officers of the Imperial suite, by Count Metternich, Count von Eulenburg, Admiral von Senden Bibran, and Count von Bülow, the German Chancellor. On his arrival on the 25th the King was entertained by the Kaiser at a cere-

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xix. p. 82.

monial dinner on board the *Hohenzollern*. The most cordial toasts were exchanged between the two monarchs, and the King in replying to the toast of his health observed that, apart from the attraction which the Kiel yachting week had for him, he entertained the wish, if possible, to knit still more closely by renewed personal intercourse the intimate relations of kinship which had for so long connected the English and Prussian Royal Houses. "May our two flags," he added, "float side by side to the most remote ages even as to-day, for the maintenance of peace and the welfare not only of our own countries, but also of all other nations."

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Among the many guests was the former Chief Court Marshal of the Empress Frederick, Count Senckendorff, long acquainted with the King, who reposed great trust in him. Senckendorff, at the behest of Bülow, with whom he was friendly, arranged an interview between the King and the Chancellor. The interview, which pleased and reassured the King, took place after a breakfast to which the Kaiser and the Chancellor were invited. Bülow and the King sat for a long time together over their cigars. "In discussing the possible conclusion of an alliance between Germany and England," the Kaiser relates in his *Memoirs*, "the King stated that such a thing was not at all necessary in the case of our two countries, seeing that there was no real cause for enmity or strife between them. This refusal to make an alliance was a plain indication of the English policy of encirclement which soon made itself clearly and disagreeably felt at the Algeciras Conference." But Bülow's report of the conversation (June 26) gives a rather different impression:

To-day on the *Iduna*, after breakfast, King Edward drew me into a fairly long political discussion. At first His Majesty spoke about the Far East. He said that Russia owed her misfortunes to herself. Her diplomacy had been as unskilful as her warfare on sea and land. The Japanese were distinguishing themselves in every direction. Moreover, they were normally in the right. Russia had neither justification nor cause to go to Port Arthur, nothing to seek in Korea, and taken Manchuria from the Chinese in a brutal manner.

The King said that, had Russia listened to him, she would have avoided the war. At the end of November he had conveyed to the Emperor Nicholas, then staying at Spala, the

conditions under which Japan was then prepared to come to an understanding with Russia. The Emperor Nicholas had postponed the answer to these proposals too long. . . . It was then too late.

King Edward showed that he desired a speedy end to the war, and would soon offer his mediation. . . . He did not expect Russian successes on land or sea. . . . The King spoke of the Yellow Peril. He cannot recognise such a thing He said that the Japanese are an intelligent, brave, and knightly people, as civilised as Europeans. . . .

The King expressed his desire for friendly relations with Germany. Germany and England had no political differences of interests. The understanding between England and France was not directed against Germany. He was not thinking of trying to isolate Germany. . . . He wished for a similar understanding with Russia. . . .[1]

Two days later the King visited the Kiel dockyards in company with his nephew, and after witnessing a regatta of the ships' crews, dined at the Yacht Club. The next day the King travelled with the Kaiser to Hamburg and lunched with the Burgomaster and Senators. His reception was most cordial, and he told the Kaiser he could not have been more warmly greeted at Liverpool. On returning to Kiel that evening he dined with Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser again being among the guests Somewhat to the annoyance of the King, his health was again proposed by his nephew. The Emperor emphasised those feelings of comradeship which "exist, or ought to exist, between the armies and navies of the world," and paid a special tribute to the British navy, with which as a youth he had become acquainted whilst visiting England with his parents. The King would understand him when he said that after he came to the throne he had attempted to reproduce, on a scale commensurate with the resources and necessities of his own country, that which had made so deep an impression upon his mind when he saw it as a young man in England. He concluded with the toast to the King. The King's reply, relates Tirpitz,[2] was cool, "and during his inspection of our ships he exchanged meaning looks and words with Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty." That day the Kaiser telegraphed to the Tsar :

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[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xix. i. p. 106.
[2] *My Memoirs*, p. 200.

Uncle Bertie's visit is going of course off well. He is very lively and active and most kind. His wish for peace is quite pronounced and is the motive for his liking to offer his services wherever he sees collisions in the world. The weather is simply disgusting. Best love to Alix. Sympathise sincerely with your fresh losses of ships and men.[1]

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On 29th June the two sovereigns witnessed from the *Victoria and Albert* the race for a cup which was the King's gift. The same evening the King, after dining with the Kaiser and the Empress, set out on his journey back to England.

Bülow's final report of the meeting ran (June 29):

King Edward is particularly pleased with his stay at Hamburg. He told me he had telegraphed to Lord Lansdowne that he would not be better treated in an English town than he has been at Hamburg.

To-day, for the first time, the King had a political discussion with the Kaiser, which followed the same lines as his earlier talks with me.

During the last few days the King has again engaged me in long political discussions, in which he expressed on the one hand active sympathy with Japan and her claims, and, on the other hand, a desire that the war might soon be ended, and that Anglo-Russian differences should be smoothed away. . . .

The King thought the Japanese would not pursue the Russians if the latter evacuated Manchuria. He stated that the return of Manchuria to China and the recognition of Japanese preponderance in Korea could not justly be objected to.

Neither the King nor any English statesmen believe in the possibility of a favourable turn of the war for Russia. They think revolutionary movements in Russia not improbable. . . .[2]

On that day the King received a telegram from Mr. Balfour congratulating him "on the admirable way in which everything seems to have gone off in Kiel and Hamburg. This undoubted success," the Prime Minister added, "must have a good effect upon important international relations."

But Schwertfeger more accurately records the situation:

It is certainly not a matter of indifference that the personal relations of the sovereigns of two great Empires shall be cordial, but on both sides an endeavour has been made to show that there

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. XIX. i. p. 189.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. XIX. i. p. 189.

is nothing more in it. The meeting of the two monarchs has produced no concrete arrangements on any particular point, nor any change of direction in the line of policy of their countries. In fact nothing of this kind was attempted, and it could not be otherwise. Public opinion would not have allowed it.

The tone of the English press has been proper, but the meeting of the two sovereigns has been commented on with reserve. The government organs have emphasised the fact that the Kiel interview was nothing but a personal demonstration of courtesy.

The German press has been equally cold, and the official newspapers have taken care that the significance of the Kiel interview should not be exaggerated. The toasts of the Emperor William and King Edward, although conceived in friendly and even warm terms, were, at bottom, of the same character as the newspaper articles.

The important passage of the Emperor's speech was that in which he said that the mission of the German fleet was to protect German territory and commerce and that it is an aid, like the Army, to the maintenance of peace. This passage is a reply to a certain anxiety which became evident in England when Germany decided to develop her navy. This navy is not meant to attack anyone, but to place Germany in a position to defend herself against any oppression and enable her to negotiate in world affairs with the greatest maritime powers on fairly equal terms.

The impression left by the Kiel interview is that Germany, who has taken advantage of the war in the Far East to bring about considerable improvement in her relations with Russia, does not want to place these relations in jeopardy by too much intimacy with England, and that England on her side does not want, by a rapprochement with Germany, to go so far as to cast doubt upon the strength of the Anglo-French entente.

To sum up, there is usually a tendency to exaggerate the importance of meetings such as this at Kiel. This time it is as well to keep impressions within reasonable limits.

Count Metternich, the German Ambassador to England, in his report to Bülow on 9th July, emphasised a different point of view:

I know for certain that great influence was brought to bear on King Edward to keep him back from Kiel. . . .

Soveral told me that King Edward had come back exceedingly satisfied from Kiel. . . . Soveral, who is a clever man, and perhaps knows the King as well as anyone, remarked that good relations with Germany had always been greatly desired by the King. According to tradition and personal feeling, the King

is for Germany, and dissensions with Germany disturb the King's mind.

On the surface the visit had been a great success, the relations between the King and Kaiser being very cordial. It was an outward and visible sign of Anglo-German friendship, but as the coming years were to prove it did not express that inward and spiritual amity that is the real foundation for peace.

VII

In July 1904 public opinion in England was gravely excited by the mode in which Russia, in her conflict with Japan, was exercising the right of search of neutral vessels for contraband of war. Two cruisers of the Russian Volunteer Fleet, the *Smolensk* and *Peterburg*, had passed out of the Black Sea disguised as merchantmen, and, resuming their guise as warships in the Red Sea, were arresting British and German vessels on the ground that they were carrying ammunition, although their cargo was destined for neutral ports. The King expressed himself in complete agreement with his government in their stern protest to Russia. With much energy he urged on Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne the desirability of joining Germany in some joint action, and his suggestion did not fall on deaf ears. The Cabinet (July 19) took strong steps by way of protest, resolving to stop, by force if necessary, any Russian prize going through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea. The King described the Cabinet's action as "*most* wise. They could not do more for the moment, nor less." Russia promptly yielded to the British representations, and the King argued that an opportunity of conciliating Germany was missed. "If we," he noted on Lansdowne's letter of explanation of the government's procedure (July 21), "and Germany were to act together it would frighten Russia, and besides be an opportunity for a useful rapprochement between England and Germany." But Lansdowne (July 21), after discussion with Balfour, thought that "an overture of this kind is undesirable," adding that "the German point of view probably differs from ours, and Metternich, to whom I spoke yesterday, was without instructions."

Sir Charles Hardinge, who enjoyed the complete confidence of the King, wrote to him reassuringly of Russia's willingness to meet the British demands, and the King acknowledged the

prudence of tackling her single-handed He was always desirous of pursuing ways of conciliation consistent with the due assertion of his country's rights, and his natural irritation over Russia's error in pressing her claims against contraband interrupted but briefly his political advances to Russia.

Meanwhile the Russian stronghold of Port Arthur was proving itself no match for the Japanese assaults by sea and land, and it was evident that some effort would soon be made by the Russian fleet at Port Arthur to escape from the blockading Japanese fleet. It was supposed that if the Russian fleet could escape it might take refuge in the British harbour of Wei-hai-Wei. The matter was considered by the British cabinet, and the King, on receipt of their decision, wrote to Mr. Balfour (July 29).

> The King has received Mr. Balfour's letter, this evening, by messenger, informing him of the decision the Cabinet arrived at yesterday, in the event of the Russian Fleet escaping from Port Arthur and making for Wei-hai-Wei.
>
> After the strong legal opinion expressed by the Attorney-General, the King sees that the Cabinet has no other alternative but to intern the "flying belligerent" and at the same time to prevent any combat taking place in our waters. To carry out this policy, it is absolutely necessary that the British Fleet should return to Wei-hai-Wei. The King presumes that Japan cannot have any objection to this, as she was anxious that the British Fleet should remain at Wei-hai-Wei after she was informed that neither Russian nor Japanese Fleets were allowed to enter the Harbour.

But the event which the King anticipated did not come to pass. A fortnight later, on 10th August 1904, Admiral Togo defeated the Russian fleet off Port Arthur, and four days later Admiral Kaimamura caught the Vladivostock squadron and shattered it. Thus the Russian flag disappeared from the Pacific, and only the Baltic fleet could hope seriously to challenge the supremacy of the Japanese navy.

The King was then staying at Marienbad as Duke of Lancaster,[1]

[1] In September 1905 some controversy arose in the *Westminster Gazette* as to the King's right to the title of Duke of Lancaster. Lord James of Hereford wrote to Lord Knollys on 9th September 1905 that he thought the King had no right to the title, and prepared a letter to that effect for the press. He sent a copy of the letter to Knollys (September 14), in which he claimed that the title descended to descendants of John of Gaunt, and did not go with the Duchy, whose lands, since Edward IV.'s time, were vested in the sovereign.

where he was expecting a visit from the Emperor of Austria. Here, too, was Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and the Hon. Alan Johnstone, Counsellor at Vienna, who received private information from Mr. Wickham Steed (*The Times* correspondent) of Kaimamura's victory. Johnstone reported the news to the King, who was delighted to be so promptly informed. "Yesterday," relates Steed, "he chaffed the life out of Ferdinand of Bulgaria on the promenade, who knew nothing, though he always plumes himself upon being more rapidly informed than anybody else." The King, who was always anxious to be most quickly informed of events in the Far East, now desired Sir Stanley Clarke to "short-circuit" Johnstone and to get the news direct from Steed. Events were indeed happening rapidly. The crucial battle of Liao-Yang, which lasted from 25th August to 5th September and ended in the retreat of the Russian forces to Mukden, was about to begin, and the issue of the war seemed to depend on its outcome. When at the end of August Steed returned to Vienna, he was asked to continue the service not only while the King was at Marienbad, but also during his journey home as far as Flushing. From the royal yacht at Flushing Steed presently received a note conveying the "Duke of Lancaster's" thanks and saying that he had invariably beaten the news from the Foreign Office by thirty-six hours.

The story has a curious sequel. Steed thought *The Times* would be pleased with this testimonial to the efficiency of their news service, and he sent the "Duke of Lancaster's" letter to Mr. Moberley Bell, the manager, together with a bill for the telegrams to the King. A sharp reprimand followed. "Albt. Edward," it ran, "ought to have paid for the telegrams himself. If they offer you the Victorian Order mind you find a way of refusing it." Steed answered that if the M.V.O. were thrown at his head he would "duck and let it hit manager in chest, for the rest . . . he would never accept any Order as long as he wielded a pen." [1]

To this letter from Lord James the King appended the autograph comment: "I have always imagined that I was Duke of Lancaster, as the Sovereign of England always is. Queen Victoria considered herself so, just as the heir to throne is Duke of Cornwall, and I have no wish to give up my rights." In the event Lord James suppressed the letter.

[1] Wickham Steed's *Through Thirty Years*, i. p. 214.

VIII

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A few days earlier a happy domestic event rather served to lighten the growing gloom at the Russian Court. The Tsar's hope of a son and heir was at length realised, and on 12th August 1904 King Edward promptly accepted the Tsar's invitation to stand godfather to the little Grand Duke Alexis, and to share the sponsorship with the Kaiser. The King sought in the discharge of the friendly office an opportunity of pursuing a step further the political entente. He deputed Prince Louis of Battenberg to attend the christening as his representative. "You know," the King wrote to Lansdowne on the same day, "how able and discreet he is. So I am in hopes that his visit may be productive of good, if he is able to have private conversation with the Emperor and Lamsdorff. Hardinge wrote he is delighted that he is coming"

The King now sent a personal message to Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, through Prince Louis, assuring him of his confidence in "the Count's sincere desire to help in restoring friendly relations between England and Russia," and also entrusted Prince Louis with an autograph letter to the Tsar, inviting him to discuss with his deputy the relations between the two countries. During his brief stay in St. Petersburg Prince Louis had an hour's interview with both the Tsar and his Foreign Minister. He found the Tsar in a good humour, but opposed to any intervention on the part of any other power in the current war, and extremely resentful of China's unfriendly attitude. "If that country gives us any more trouble," he told Prince Louis, "I will declare war against it." His only comment on Anglo-Russian relations was to the effect that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance placed England in a somewhat ambiguous position, and Prince Louis tactfully did not press the subject. Count Lamsdorff, however, was more optimistic than his master about the ultimate establishment on a lasting basis of a good understanding between Russia and England, but he too repeated the Tsar's complaints about the obstacles placed by Britain in the way of the coaling *en route* of the Russian Baltic fleet, which was about to set out for Japanese waters.

On 26th August Prince Louis, who had visited the King at

Marienbad on his way out five days earlier, returned to Marienbad with his mission accomplished. He reported favourably to the King of both the Tsar and his Foreign Minister's friendly attitude, and the King forwarded to Mr. Balfour a detailed memorandum of what had passed between Prince Louis and his Russian hosts. Prince Louis's report on the whole seemed to the King to be of good omen.

IX

But again the fair promise of an Anglo-Russian understanding was thwarted, this time by an event which seemed likely at one time to plunge the two countries into war. On the night of 21st October 1904 the Russian Baltic fleet, under Admiral Rozhdestvensky, on its way through the North Sea, made a most amazing blunder. Mistaking a few British trawlers that were fishing on the Dogger Bank for Japanese vessels, it promptly opened fire on them. A steam trawler was sunk and the captain and third hand killed, while other vessels were severely damaged and some of the crews injured. The Russian fleet passed on without rendering any assistance.

The news reached England on 24th October and caused immense consternation, which the King fully shared. Next day the King received from the Tsar the following telegram:

> Through foreign source have heard of sad incident in North Sea. Deplore loss of lives of innocent fishermen. Our fleet being at sea I have not yet received any direct information from Admiral. Having had many warnings that Japanese were lurking [in] fishing smacks and other vessels for purpose of destroying our Squadron on its way out, great precautions were ordered to be taken, especially by night, whenever any vessels or boat in sight. Trust no complications will arise between our countries owing to this occurrence. Best love, NICKY.

In reply the King called special attention to the callous conduct of the Russian naval officers in making no attempt to succour the victims:

> I have received your telegram and am surprised that only through a foreign source you heard of the untoward incident which occurred in the North Sea. Knowing your kind heart I felt sure you would deplore the loss of innocent lives. But what has caused me and my Country so painful an impression is that

your Squadron did not stop to offer assistance to the wounded, as searchlights must have revealed to your Admiral that the ships were British fishing vessels

The King first sent the telegram to Lansdowne on the previous day: "Hoping you will agree with the wording of it, and if so please send it off at once. I have kept a copy of it as well as the Emperor's original telegram." Lord Lansdowne regarded the King's reply as "most appropriate, and he is particularly glad that your Majesty dwelt upon the callous conduct of the Russian naval officers in making no attempt to succour the victims of the attack." Lord Lansdowne enclosed an explanation "which he has just received from the Russian Ambassador (Count Benckendorff). It is satisfactory, so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, and Lord Lansdowne proposes to tell Count Benckendorff so."

The following day the King replied:

Thanks for sending off telegram. I return Benckendorff's letter which I think treats the whole matter in too flippant a way. The Russian Government does not treat the matter with that gravity of importance which it invites. That the Russian Admiral should not have sent any report home of what had occurred is inconceivable. In what other country could such a thing occur? Mere apologies to us will not suffice. *Some* punishment *must* be meted out to the Russian officers, whoever may be the responsible ones, for the outrage which has been committed and which has been censured by all civilised countries. I have kept the papers which I received from you yesterday evening. I am personally very sorry for Benckendorff, who does his best, but he must "face the music," and not pass the matter over as lightly as he would like to do. . . .

Lord Lansdowne now announced to the Russian Ambassador that England would demand a full apology and disclaimer, together with full reparations and a searching inquiry as to who should bear the responsibility. Two days later the King wrote again to Lord Lansdowne, approving as "excellent and not at all too strong" his letter to Benckendorff.

"Regrets and apologies on the part of the Emperor," he added, "are not sufficient and will not satisfy any one here. If the Russian Admiral continues on his way without even communicating with his own Government, we really have a right to stop him, as we cannot afford to be treated in such an

offhand manner. The Russian Admiral *must* be punished for his conduct, and we have, I think, a *right* to demand it. Public opinion is running very high, and something must be done to appease it."

A few hours later, however, the King modified his attitude. Wherever relations with foreign countries were concerned, however great the stress and animosity of the moment, he was always one of the first to consider the ultimate effect of any drastic step. The change in his attitude on this occasion was due to his receiving a copy of Admiral Rozhdestvensky's report which, he wrote to Lord Lansdowne,

certainly causes me, as I feel sure it does you, great surprise. The explanation of the incident is certainly a strange one, as one can hardly credit the statement that a Japanese torpedo-boat steamed at full speed towards the Russian Squadron, which caused the latter to fire at and sink our trawlers. Would it not be possible to ascertain from Japanese Legation in London whether they know of any of their torpedo-boats being employed in the North Sea? Are we to accept the Russian Admiral's statement, and if so, will it satisfy anybody? I see our difficulty, and that is our demand on the Russian Government, to punish somebody; should we in a similar position consent to do so? I almost think not, and it might therefore be awkward if we placed ourselves in a position which would meet with an absolute refusal. Public opinion, egged on with unnecessary violence by the press, is very strong against Russia, but are we prepared to go to war with her? It would, I think, be a dire calamity for this country, as nobody knows what it would involve, and after all for the sake of the heirs of two harmless fishermen. The Government have a heavy responsibility, and Mr. Balfour's words at Southampton will be awaited with serious interest.

By now the King had seen the daily papers, and though his indignation against the Russian Admiral was intense, the next day he thought that the unbridled language of the British press was too strong, and furthermore might lead to war. Hence he now wired to Lord Lansdowne (October 28):

Strongly deprecate pressing for punishment of Admiral. Russia could not accept such a humiliation;

and followed it up with this letter:

I feel convinced in my own mind that the Russians are anxious now to make any "amende honorable" consonant with

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their own dignity, so I think we should endeavour to meet them half-way. The Press has become so violent that it may drag us into a war before we know where we are, and war between Russia and Great Britain would be so serious a calamity that we can hardly think of its possibility. . . . I am convinced that an International Commission as suggested from St. Petersburg is the only way out of the difficulty, but on calm reflection I feel sure that the Russian Admiral did take some of the vessels of our steam trawling fleet for Japanese torpedo-boats or destroyers and opened fire at once, probably from superior orders that he had received in consequence of the scare about Japanese boats endeavouring to destroy the Russian Squadron on their way to the Far East. Excuse these hurried lines, but I am anxious that you should still receive them this evening.

The next day he added :

I really think that we see daylight, and what has been a most grave and serious incident may pass away quietly, and perhaps we may be on better footing with Russia later. They must, however, see that the world cannot tolerate their Fleet opening fire on any ship they meet that comes within a reasonable distance. However, I feel sure that the Emperor and Lamsdorff are most anxious for peace and conciliation, but they have a violent military party to contend with You have, I am sure, many reasons to approve of Beckendorff's and Hardinge's attitude during very difficult and delicate negotiations.

The Russian government happily made no attempt to escape the consequences of the Admiral's mistake, and the British government, in spite of the excited state of public feeling, had no intention of proceeding to extremities. The Ambassadors, too, were straining every nerve to avoid a rupture. It was rapidly agreed between the two governments that England should submit its injury to the independent tribunal at The Hague, and Sir Charles Hardinge was able without much difficulty to arrange satisfactory terms of reference. So pleased was the King with the satisfactory solution of the incident that he rewarded Sir Charles Hardinge for his services by sending him the G.C M.G.[1]

[1] The International Commission of Inquiry consisted of Admirals of England and Russia, together with representatives of the navies of France, the United States, and Austria. Paris was the place of meeting, and on 25th February 1905 the Commissioners declared for Great Britain, condemning Russia to pay £65,000 by way of compensation.

X

By now Germany had begun to realise that King Edward was definitely set on removing all obstacles to cordial relations between England and Russia, whilst at the same time endeavouring to minimise the "war-scare" between England and Germany. The report of the German Military Attaché in London, Count von der Schulenburg, made on 13th December is illuminating :

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There need be no fear of an immediate war but little doubt, on the other hand, that war will eventually occur, for England has not forgotten the Boer War. This feeling has popularised the English-Franco Entente, and moves toward an agreement with Russia. There is no doubt that the King is exerting great influence in this anti-German feeling—witness his visit to Paris, the enthusiastic reception of Loubet in London, the sympathetic attitude towards the Entente shown to a greater degree in England than in France. His further policy is a union with Russia, which would leave Germany altogether isolated. It is not believed that either the King or his Government are desirous of declaring war upon Germany; it cannot be emphasised sufficiently that there is no fear of immediate war, but that Germany must nevertheless be prepared for it. . . .

It is altogether improbable that friendly relations will again be established between England and Germany. The only remedy against conflict with England lies in a union with Russia. Such a union would cause much anger to England, but would prevent her from attacking us, since an attack upon us would leave Russia free passage to India. It is already well known how much disturbance is created by the ghost of Russia in India, how much more then the ghost of German-Russia ! Neither is it realised in England how little Russia is able to cause any harm in India. . . .[1]

Two days later Count von Eulenburg reported to Bülow from London :

The opinion is far more widespread in England that Germany is preparing an attack upon England, so that any stir in the British Navy can be considered to be of a defensive rather than of an offensive nature. . . . His Majesty King Edward is most certainly striving to bring about an alliance with Russia, and the Entente with France may be considered to be only a bridge for this purpose. For the same reason, too, several articles of a friendly nature have appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* at the

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. XIX. ii. pp. 360-5.

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express desire of King Edward himself, in order to lull Germany's fears to rest, so that these same fears may not drive her into the arms of Russia—in that case there would be no room for England.[1]

A month later (February 1, 1905) Hardinge reported to the King an interview he had had with the Tsar, who spoke sanguinely of future Anglo-Russian relations, in spite of "thrilling times" In the following May Hardinge had a long interview with Count Lamsdorff. The King on hearing of the projected interview at once telegraphed to Hardinge to tell Lamsdorff that he had

preserved a very pleasant remembrance of my interview with him nearly three years ago, and that I have great confidence in him in the knowledge that his efforts would always be directed towards the maintenance of peace and of good relations between the two countries.

Lamsdorff, when Hardinge gave him the King's message, was visibly pleased, and at once exclaimed "C'est mon culte et ma religion!" and asked Hardinge at the same time to transmit to the King the expression of his respectful homage and his sincere thanks. He added that he would continue to do his utmost to improve the relations between England and Russia, and "he trusted that your Majesty's government would fully realise that interested parties were endeavouring to stir up discord between the two countries, and he hoped that both governments would frustrate such efforts by endeavouring to avoid any incidents which would be likely to stir up animosity and ill-feeling. He thoroughly realised the actual difficulties of the situation, but he was full of confidence that at the end of this miserable war both governments would find a means of arriving at a satisfactory arrangement of all outstanding differences in the same manner as the Anglo-French arrangement had been made."[2]

Meanwhile the ill-fated Russian fleet under Admiral Rozhdestvensky reached Japanese waters in May, where it was joined by another Baltic squadron under Admiral Nebogatoff. On 27th May, in the Straits of Tsushima, between Korea and Japan, the combined Russian fleet was met by the Japanese fleet under Admiral Togo. "We are anxiously waiting news regarding the

[1] *Die grosse Politik,* vol xix ii p. 366.
[2] Hardinge to Knollys, May 1905.

Russian and Japanese squadrons, and what results their meeting will produce," wrote the King to Lansdowne from Majorca when yachting in the Mediterranean (April 15, 1905). The result of the encounter was a crushing disaster for Russia. Well-nigh all the Russian vessels were sunk, captured, or disabled, and nearly all the sailors were killed or taken prisoner. It was the greatest naval battle since Trafalgar, and Russian prestige was dealt a blow from which it did not recover. Ten days later President Roosevelt offered to mediate between the two belligerents. On the 10th June Japan accepted the offer, and was followed three days later by Russia.[1]

The Peace Missions met at Portsmouth on 10th August 1905. Both parties submitted terms of peace in writing, and a deadlock followed, Russia refusing to pay an indemnity or to surrender interned ships. When the Japanese terms were communicated to the King he commented on them (August 18): " This is more satisfactory than could have been expected." Finally Japan moderated her terms, and on 29th August agreement was reached, and the Treaty of Peace was signed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on 5th September. Russia obtained highly favourable terms in view of the ill-success of her arms by land and sea. The King received the news of peace with considerable relief. " That peace between Russia and Japan has at last been concluded," he wrote to Lady Londonderry from Marienbad on 3rd September, " is indeed a universal blessing, and may it only be a lasting one."

As soon as King Edward heard that Count Witte, the able Finance Minister of Russia, had been appointed Russian Peace Commissioner at Portsmouth in place of Count Muravieff (July 19, 1905) he expressed a wish to meet him in England. On the Count's arrival in Paris on his return from America, whence he intended to travel direct to St. Petersburg to report to the Tsar, he found two invitations awaiting him, one from the British Embassy, in the name of King Edward, and the other from the German Embassy, in the name of the Kaiser. A third invitation came to him, independently of the Kaiser's, from Bülow, who asked him to pay a visit to Baden. Count Witte at once politely refused the British and German sovereigns' invitations on the ground that his duty called him to visit his own sovereign first. But an order reached him from the Tsar bidding him call upon

[1] See pp. 432-3, *infra*.

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the Kaiser on his way through Germany at the Kaiser's hunting box at Rominten, East Prussia. Count Witte arrived at Rominten on 26th September and stayed till next day, favourably impressing the Kaiser, who wrote to the Tsar commending his work at Portsmouth, where he had secured, in the Kaiser's opinion, most favourable terms for Russia.

The invitation to visit King Edward had been conveyed to M. Witte by the Councillor of the Russian Embassy in London, M Poklewsky-Koziell, who urgently persuaded him to cross the Channel and accept King Edward's hospitality. Poklewsky, a man of private wealth, which he spent freely, was liked by King Edward and was thoroughly convinced of the wisdom of an Anglo-Russian entente. He gave Witte the impression that he brought a message direct from the King and that his mission was approved by Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London. But he was acting quite unofficially on his own initiative in the belief that he was carrying out the wish of superior authority. He urged on Count Witte King Edward's desire of friendship with Russia, but Count Witte pointed out that the Tsar regarded England as Russia's arch-enemy. He agreed, however, with his interlocutor that, were it possible to remove the misunderstandings which prevailed between England and Russia in regard to Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet, Russian interests would be well served. But Count Witte made it plain that Russia, who needed peace, could not afford to prejudice existing relations with any other Continental Power. Witte noted that "I feared an agreement with Great Britain would arouse the jealousy of Germany. As a result we would perhaps be forced into making an agreement with that country too, and be cheated in the end. It was owing to my opposition that the (Anglo-Russian) agreement was not concluded before 1907." [1]

XI

The Japanese war had found no favour outside military circles in Russia, and had stimulated the people at large to

[1] Witte's *Memoirs*, vol. i. 432. Poklewsky was also on very friendly terms with Isvolsky, who was ultimately responsible for the Anglo-Russian Entente. Count Witte points out that that instrument followed the lines which Poklewsky sketched at the interview in Paris, and he attributed its conclusion largely to the confidential intimacy subsisting between King Edward and Poklewsky.

an insurrectionary fervour which brought them into open conflict with the Tsar's government. From end to end of the land there were scenes of violent disorder and bloodshed, and for the second time in history a general strike was engineered. The Tsar's constitutional habit of indecision rendered him quite unequal to the situation. A sentiment of loyalty to his person still flourished among the peasantry, and had he been a man of character he might have assuaged the fury of rebellion by conciliatory advances to his people. But when an immense deputation of strikers requested permission to present a petition to him at the Winter Palace on 22nd January 1905, he declined to leave his retreat of Tsarskoe Selo, and suffered the petitioning crowd in St. Petersburg to be shot down by his soldiery. Although he subsequently made some small effort to conciliate the agitation, he was in the hands of counsellors who imposed on him a policy of vacillation, and he never recovered the ground he had lost. Although the internal confusion of Russia was recognised by King Edward to involve the future of that country in grave uncertainty, he steadfastly supported Hardinge's view that everything should be done to foster an Anglo-Russian understanding.

The complete collapse of Russia and the triumphant victory of Japan reduced to a low ebb for a long time Russia's capacities. It was in such circumstances that a few of Russia's ministers abandoned their traditional suspicions of England and announced a willingness to act with her in a limited series of circumstances. Russia had recently experienced one alliance with a Western European Power, but the failure of France to render any help in her strife with Japan hardly encouraged Russian public opinion in the development of European alliances; and Russia's contest, while it remained single-handed, had given onlooking nations, who stood aside from the warfare, the opportunity of gathering chestnuts out of the military fire with which they were unconcerned.

The King, although disquieted by the progress of the revolutionary movement, still clung to the notion that an understanding with Russia would be best calculated to stabilise the bases of peace. When, on 21st October 1905, the British Ambassador, Sir Charles Hardinge, announced an imminent interview with the Tsar, and invited a special message from

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the King for him to deliver in audience, the King promptly telegraphed:

> When you are received by the Emperor pray express to him my earnest desire that the best and most durable relations should be established between the two countries, and that all important points should be discussed in the most amicable spirit and arranged as soon as possible.
>
> I need not assure the Emperor what my personal feelings are towards him as they are already well known to him.
>
> You can at the same time convey to him my hope that he may find himself able to grant a more liberal form of Government to his Country. EDWARD R & I

The Emperor was gratified at the King's expression of good feeling, but kept a discreet silence on the "more liberal form of government" The Tsaritza, however, was not so discreet, and when, two months later, Hardinge took his farewell of the Tsar and Tsaritza on the occasion of his relinquishment of the post of Ambassador, he reported to the King (January 11, 1906) that the Tsaritza spoke with some heat of the cruel deeds of the revolutionaries, and declared that "the Letts were worse than the Turks." The Tsar was quite favourable to efforts to improve relations between England and Russia, and promised to support France and England at the coming Algeciras Conference. On parting, the Tsar assured Hardinge that he relied on him in his new office as permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office to promote harmony with Russia.

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The appointment of Hardinge to the post of Permanent Under Secretary to the Foreign Office was by no means uncongenial to the King. Hardinge's predecessor, Lord Sanderson, had just retired after a long service, and though the King had been inclined to reckon him among the "old women" of the Foreign Office, he appreciated his wide knowledge and caution and agreed to his promotion to a peerage on retirement. The confidential relations in which Hardinge stood to the King were likely to facilitate more than ever the King's co-operation in the direction of foreign policy, and the King did not oppose his withdrawal from the St. Petersburg Embassy. Through the remaining years of the King's reign Sir Charles Hardinge remained chief permanent official of the Foreign Office. At the same time the King believed Hardinge to be fitted for higher dignities, and held the

view that he might with advantage hold other dignified posts in the diplomatic service in due time.[1]

Meanwhile the Tsar was living in seclusion in the small palace at Peterhof, seeing as few people as possible out of his own little circle, and giving the public no indication of his views and intentions, as if he were a private person with no special interest in the course of events. The Tsar's self-effacement and the hostility of Count Witte prevented for the time being any further advance along the avenue of Anglo-Russian friendship. But King Edward was not thus easily to be daunted, and he kept his desire for better Anglo-Russian relations prominently in the foreground of his political aspirations.

XII

One result of the Russo-Japanese war was the revision of the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1901. In the spring of 1905 negotiations began with Japan for the strengthening in a new Treaty of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. It was deemed desirable, with the aid of Japan, to preserve the *status quo* in the Far East by ensuring Japan against further encroachments by Russia in Corea and by securing Japanese aid against Russian encroachments in Central Asia. The negotiations continued through the summer while Japan and Russia were coming to terms at Portsmouth. The new Anglo-Japanese Treaty was signed in London on 12th August, but was not announced until 29th August owing to the need of allowing the peace between Russia and Japan to be concluded. The main aim of the new Treaty was to maintain peace in the regions of Eastern Asia and India, to preserve the integrity of China and the principle of the "open door" there, and thirdly, to secure the territorial rights of the two Powers and to defend their special interests in Eastern Asia and India. The arrangement was regarded with some concern in Russia, but it did not retard the slow progress of the Anglo-Russian rapprochement.

The settlement of the Russo-Japanese conflict and the revision of the Anglo-Japanese treaty inaugurated a new era of cordiality between Great Britain and Japan, which was enhanced

[1] Sir Arthur Nicolson succeeded Hardinge at St. Petersburg. Hardinge subsequently became Viceroy of India, 1910–16, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1916–20), and British Ambassador in Paris (1920–2).

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by the interchange of royal courtesies. Three months before peace had been signed Prince and Princess Arisugawa, of the Imperial House of Japan, had arrived in England on a fifteen days' visit and were entertained by King Edward and other members of the royal family. A banquet was given in their honour at Buckingham Palace on 27th June, and King Edward conferred upon the Prince the honorary Commandership of the Bath. On leaving England on 11th July the Japanese Prince addressed a message of farewell to the English people in which he dwelt on the warmth of feeling between the two nations.

"From the King in the Palace to the man in the street," the message ran, "nothing could exceed the kindness of which the Prince and Princess had been the recipients. The visit had no political object, as had been hinted. The relations between the two countries were already too good for that to have been necessary. It was simply meant to express the friendship of the Japanese people, separated by thousands of miles from England, and to bring a personal message of friendship and respect from the Emperor to the King and Queen."

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Early in 1906 the King's nephew, Prince Arthur of Connaught, who had been commissioned by the King to invest the Emperor of Japan with the Order of the Garter, left London for Japan with Lord Redesdale, Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny, and Sir Arthur Davidson, all personal friends of the King. The King had made careful choice of the members of the mission some months earlier, and wrote the list out in his own hand. The reception given to the mission by the Imperial family, the army, the navy, and the nation, was probably without precedent on account of the universality of the welcome accorded and the absence of any discordant element. Prince Arthur was also charged to confer the Order of Merit on Admiral Togo and Field-Marshals Yamagata and Oyama, a duty which further heightened his popularity. Fêtes were given not only to the mission but also to the officers and crews of the British fleet, and many courtesies were exchanged.

Eighteen months later, in the spring of 1907, the King's attention was much occupied while at Biarritz, and again while cruising in the Mediterranean, by the arrangements for the reception in May of another member of the Japanese Imperial house, Prince Fushimi, who was coming to return the visit paid

to the Mikado by Prince Arthur of Connaught at the head of the Garter mission in 1906. The state visit was to last from four to five days, and the King wished to follow the procedure observed in the case of Prince Arisugawa in 1905, being rather reluctant to accord the Prince the ceremonial honours observed in the case of a royal sovereign, but the Foreign Office and the government wanted everything on an elaborate scale, which the King deprecated. The preliminary negotiations with the King were thus full of difficulties.

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In view of the Japanese Prince's visit, the Japanese Ambassador applied to the Foreign Office to prohibit the performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *The Mikado*, which it was feared would offend Japanese susceptibilities. Mrs. D'Oyly Carte, the manager of the Opera Company, strongly protested to Lord Althorp, the Lord Chamberlain, against the restriction, pointing out that the play had been performed for many years throughout England without objection. The King took the view that international courtesy required the prohibition, and that it should extend to the performance of the music of the opera by military and naval and other bands during Prince Fushimi's visit. The prohibition excited much adverse comment; but it followed precedent. Mr. W. S. Gilbert himself, smarting under a sense of injury, wrote bitterly:

> I suppose you have read that the King (with his unfailing tact) has forbidden that *The Mikado* shall ever be played again. That means at least five thousand pounds out of my pocket. It is so easy to be tactful when the cost has to be borne by somebody else. The Mikado . . . of the Opera has no more actuality than a pantomime king, and it's a poor compliment to the Japs to suppose they would be offended by it. . . .

But a few days later he added:

> I learn from a friend, who had it direct from the King, that *the Japs* made the objection to *The Mikado*, and that at their instance it was suppressed. A delicate and polite action on the part of a guest towards a host! . . . I hear the King is very angry about it, as he was supposed to have done it off his own bat. . . . King Edward's saving sense of humour should surely have secured him against such an allegation as this.[1]

[1] Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey's *W. S. Gilbert*, pp. 100-110. The prohibition was cancelled in June, after the Imperial visitors had left.

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The King was also disturbed by the Foreign Office's proposal to attach to the Prince's staff in England Lord Roberts and Admiral Seymour, persons, in the King's view, of an eminence only fitted for a sovereign, but it was pointed out that Prince Arthur of Connaught had been attended while in Japan by Admiral Togo and Count Kuroki. The King yielded, but was very critical of all the arrangements. The final details were submitted to him while he was in his yacht off Naples.

Prince Fushimi arrived *via* Paris, where he was the guest of President Fallières, and was officially entertained in London from 6th to 11th May, but he remained in England till the 31st, spending part of his time visiting the shipyards at Barrow and Glasgow and Newcastle. In spite of the incident of *The Mikado*, the visit was a great success, and did much to secure a more favourable appreciation of the Japanese Alliance in Great Britain.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SEPARATION OF SWEDEN AND NORWAY, 1905

I

MEANWHILE, throughout the summer and autumn of 1905 much of the King's attention had been devoted to the breach between Norway and Sweden, which eventually resulted in their separation. The two countries had been forcibly united, in 1815, into a union in which Sweden was the dominant partner. Norway had long protested against Swedish interference in her affairs, and the disaffection reached its climax when, on 7th June 1905, the Norwegian Storthing at Christiania passed a resolution declaring that "the union with Sweden under one King has ceased," at the same time, however, making a request to the King of Sweden, Oscar II., to allow a Bernadotte prince of his family to become their independent sovereign. The King of Sweden naturally protested, and ignored the offer of the Crown of Norway to one of his sons.

The question at issue was purely domestic. No substantive foreign interest was involved in Norway's effort to secure her independence, and Norway's expressed willingness to accept as ruler a prince of the royal house of Sweden emphasised the local character of the whole episode. But Sweden's refusal to allow a Swedish prince to fill the newly created throne complicated the issue. If the Republican party in Norway had proved to be in a majority, and the country had adopted that form of government, no foreign Power could have had any title to interfere. But there was a likelihood, in the event of the choice of a ruler of a nationality other than Swedish, of the stirring of mutual jealousies in the countries where candidates were available. Germany was likely to feel wounded if a British prince were

selected for the new dignity, and Britain might dislike, on cognate grounds, the choice of a German king of Norway.

Trouble was feared if a rumour of the Kaiser's desire to see one of his sons chosen should prove true. In point of fact Norway, as soon as she had resolved on separation, and after Sweden had declined to consider her invitation, looked to Denmark to provide her with a King. The official attitude of England, as stated by Lord Lansdowne, was one of strict neutrality in what was merely a domestic concern for Norway.

King Edward was in official agreement with Lord Lansdowne's sound attitude, but family considerations gave the situation a strong personal interest of which correct diplomacy could take no cognisance. Prince Charles of Denmark, the grandson of King Christian of Denmark, whom influential Norwegians favoured from the outset, had married King Edward's third daughter, Maud, and was also the grand-nephew of Queen Alexandra. The family ties stirred in both the King and the Queen the hope that Prince and Princess Charles of Denmark might ascend the Norwegian throne. But the King of Denmark was unwilling to encourage Norway's choice of his grandson until the King of Sweden had fully considered and then rejected Norway's original offer to a Swedish prince. The discussion was prolonged through the summer and autumn of 1905, and King Edward's encouragement of Prince Charles's claim, to which he was prompted by the Hon. Alan Johnstone, the British Minister at Copenhagen,[1] in an almost endless stream of letters and telegrams addressed to him or to Lord Knollys, appeared to bring him into some conflict with the strict neutrality from which his government did not swerve.

From the King's point of view his whole-hearted approval of his son-in-law's candidature was somewhat modified by the marriage of his brother's daughter, Princess Margaret of Connaught, to Gustavus Adolphus, Duke of Skania, the eldest son of the Crown Prince of Sweden[2] Thus with each of the

[1] Fourth son of 1st Baron Derwent: entered diplomatic service, 1879; Secretary of the Legation at Copenhagen, 1895; Secretary of Embassy, 1901; Acting Chargé d'Affaires, 1896–99; Secretary of Embassy at Vienna, 1903; Minister at Copenhagen, 1905–10; subsequently Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Hague, 1910–17.

[2] The candidature of Prince Charles of Denmark, King Edward's son-in-law, was not likely to be quite agreeable to the King of Sweden. King Edward thereupon sought to smooth over the matter by conferring on the King of Sweden

countries concerned the King had family ties. The King of Denmark was Queen Alexandra's father, the King of Sweden was grandfather-in-law of King Edward's niece, and the proposed King of Norway was his son-in-law.

From the outset feeling in Norway ran in favour of Prince Charles of Denmark, though there was a faction which favoured a republic. When Prince Charles's name was first suggested, the Court at Copenhagen deemed it fitting to ascertain King Edward's opinion. On one point King Edward was firm from the first: as early as 15th June he wrote, "A republic would be very unfortunate." On 29th June 1905 Sir J. Rennell Rodd [1] informed the King that a definite offer of the Norwegian throne to Prince Charles of Denmark was being made, and Baron Wedel, the Norwegian Minister at Copenhagen, now appealed through Sir Rennell to the King to influence a favourable decision. On 1st July, in response to a telegram from Mr. Stephen Leech, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Copenhagen, to Lord Knollys, the King drafted in his own hand the following reply:

> In answer to your telegram please inform the Crown Prince of Denmark, as Regent, that King Edward would gladly see Prince Charles of Denmark accept the throne of Norway (in which Queen Alexandra concurs) should the King of Sweden not wish any of his (Bernadotte) family to ascend the Throne. But H.M. has no wish to interfere beyond letting his views be known and of course subject to the King of Denmark's entire approval.

The situation was rendered complex, not only by the silence of the King of Sweden and the activity of the republican party in Norway, but by the imminence of a visit of the Kaiser to the King of Denmark which was fixed for 31st July.[2] Prince Charles

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the rank of Hon. Admiral of the British Fleet (June 14). He had previously urged the cabinet (June 1) to bestow the Garter on the Swedish Crown Prince and a G.C.B. on Prince Gustavus Adolphus. The cabinet approved and the honours were bestowed on 14th June. The next day, the occasion of the wedding of Princess Margaret of Connaught and Prince Gustavus Adolphus at Windsor, the King of Sweden showed his gratitude by making King Edward an Admiral of the Swedish Navy.

[1] Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Sweden, 1904–8. He had been Councillor of Embassy at Rome, 1901–4, and subsequently became British Ambassador to Italy, 1908–19.

[2] The Kaiser had just come from a meeting with the Tsar at Björkö, and had discussed with him the succession to the Norwegian throne. "The Tsar was very concerned," the Kaiser wrote to Bulow on 25th July, "about Norway; when he was told that King Oscar did not care in the least who was to be his

doubted what course to take. It was essential that if he were to go to Norway at all, he should go at the earliest possible moment, but he would not go without the King of Denmark's consent He put his point of view to King Edward, and on 30th July King Edward telegraphed to his son-in-law:

> Your letter of the 27th received. Am quite aware of double game going on to prevent your going to Norway. Pray warn your Grandfather and Father when the German Emperor comes to be firm. I strongly urge that you should go to Norway as soon as possible to prevent some one else taking your place.

The Kaiser, however, on his visit to Copenhagen (August 1), agreed to the assumption of the new crown by Prince Charles.

The Hon. Alan Johnstone now wrote to the King that the Norwegian Storthing was quite as ready to adopt a republic as a monarchy, and that the chief chance of the Prince's adoption was an immediate visit to Christiania. Next day the King telegraphed to Johnstone: "Urge Prince Charles to go to Norway as soon as possible, or else a Republic will be proclaimed or another candidate for the throne selected. No use waiting for Sweden."

But many weeks were to elapse before Prince Charles could be persuaded to leave Denmark. The King of Sweden and his ministers felt acutely the humiliation of Norway's action, and the Swedish King could not bring himself to a decision. He was reluctant formally to accept the separation, and therefore to consider fully the offer to his son. Meanwhile the feeling was growing that a republic would suit Norway as well as a monarchy, and there was small chance for Prince Charles unless he presented himself as soon as the result of the plebiscite for the dissolution of the union was published.

The Crown Prince of Denmark, however, hesitated to affront the King of Sweden by pressing his son's candidature until the King had issued his farewell proclamation. His deference to

neighbour, and cared not even if it were to be a Republic, he showed extreme consternation. He suggested also that if no Swedish prince were willing, Prince Waldemar might go in his place. I agreed with him, but remarked to him that, according to private information from Copenhagen, the King of England had declared his choice of his son-in-law. The Tsar was very unpleasantly surprised, seemed to know nothing about it, and said that his nephew Charles was by no means suited to this post, since he had had no experience and was an insignificant and indolent man. By this means England would by 'fair or foul means' stretch forth hands towards Norway, gain influence there, and begin intrigues."—*Die grosse Politik*, vol. XIX. ii p 461.

the feelings of the King of Sweden, and his unwillingness to assent formally to his son's departure for Norway, made King Edward impatient. He deprecated the view that all depended on Prince Charles's personal action and telegraphed to Johnstone (August 7):

The King has seen your telegram 41 to M.F.A. He fears that last message received by Baron Wedel from Norwegian Government intimating Prince Charles must take lead in negotiations or offer of Crown lapses, brings matters to a head. If this intimation is carried out Prince Charles would be placed in a somewhat ridiculous position and the King of England would feel it greatly. Should our Government decline to put pressure on Sweden as you suggest, what would you advise? The King thinks that if formal offer of Crown were made direct to Prince Charles, Sweden might be induced to give way and King of Denmark and Crown Prince might allow him to accept even if Sweden did not yield, the only other alternative apparently being a Republic. It seems absurd to King that affair should fall through owing to punctiliousness of Sweden. Please read this telegram to Prince Charles.

Johnstone now hoped (August 8) to induce the Danish government to let Prince Charles go, and if they refused to do so, threatened to urge Baron Wedel to "take the bull by the horns and march off with the Prince without the consent of his family," provided that this course commended itself to the King. He was quite ready, on assurance that Prince Charles would in these circumstances be recognised by the British government when he reached Christiania and was duly elected by the Storthing, to risk not only a reprimand from Lord Lansdowne, should he come to learn of his action, but also the displeasure of the Danish royal family. The suggested "coup" was tempting to the King, but he declined to sanction such a drastic course. The same day Johnstone telegraphed to the King suggesting that His Majesty should write to the Crown Prince of Denmark "urging the absolute necessity of sending Prince Charles in order to avoid a republic." Again the King declined to act on Johnstone's advice, though he quite approved of Prince Charles's leaving immediately for Norway, even if the Danish government refused their consent and Sweden came to no terms with Norway.

Meanwhile Wedel was trying to force matters through with

a high hand. He spoke openly to Johnstone about his own "future position as Foreign Secretary and that of his wife as Grande Maîtresse" and talked of the impossibility of waiting even a week. Wedel was playing for the position of being able to say to the Storthing, "See! I have brought you a King and triumphed over all the difficulties in the way in order to get you a ruler under whom you will be recognised and who will pilot you through the negotiations"—a far different position from that of a Baron Wedel merely accompanying to Norway a king who had been duly elected by that country in a constitutional manner after she had been recognised as an independent State.[1] "He has always," continued Johnstone, "threatened Denmark with a Republic, and now he threatens Prince Charles with a *probable* loss of his throne if he is not prepared to come at any cost." Matters were further complicated by the fear that even after the legal dissolution of the union the King of Sweden might nominate a Bernadotte prince to the vacant throne, and Wedel was of the opinion that Norway would rather fight than have a Bernadotte prince thrust upon her.

Prince Charles steadfastly refused, in spite of Johnstone's urgency, to cross over to his new kingdom before he had been formally elected King. He declared that no Danish prince could accept a foreign throne without the consent of the King of Denmark. Johnstone replied that once in Norwegian waters he would be an independent sovereign, and treated as such, even by his own family. But Prince Charles was adamant. Until he had the formal approval of his grandfather and the direct invitation from Norway he would not cross the Cattegat.

Meanwhile Sweden and Norway were still unable to agree on the precise terms on which the separation should take place, and until those terms were settled Sweden deemed it premature for Norway's provisional government to choose a new ruler. On the other hand, the leading members of the provisional government thought it desirable to choose at once a new ruler who might take part in the final settlement with Sweden. Baron Wedel was strongly of this last opinion. Otherwise, he argued, the provisional government would constitute itself a republic without delay and would probably elect himself President!

King Edward inclined to the view that Prince Charles's

[1] Johnstone to Knollys, 9th August.

presence in Norway would be the best preventive of a republic, and on 11th August he sent Prince Charles the following message:

The moment has now come for you to act or lose the Crown of Norway. On good authority I am informed your sister in Sweden is intriguing against you.[1] I urge you to go at once to Norway, with or without the consent of the Danish Government, and help in the negotiations between the two countries. Maud and Baby would do well to follow a little later. The Queen is quite of the same opinion.

But Prince Charles was obdurate, and declined to hurt his grandfather's feelings by going to Norway without his consent. He replied 12th August:

I cannot go to Norway without the King of Denmark's consent, as I should hurt his feelings which I must consider. But I have reason to believe Sweden will give an answer before 20th August, as I have received a promise to that effect, so I must wait till then.

The King was disappointed by Prince Charles's reluctance. Rumours reached him that if Prince Charles stayed longer away the Kaiser designed the throne of Norway for one of his sons, and he feared that intrigues in that direction were already going on. The next day, 13th August, the King, with a view to counteracting the intrigues in the Swedish Court, wrote an autograph letter to the Crown Prince of Sweden, urging on him the view that Prince Charles's presence in Christiania would hasten a final settlement. He sent copies to the King of Denmark and the Crown Prince of Denmark. The letter runs:

My dear Gustav—You know how earnestly I have always desired that the dissolution of the Union, which has I fear become inevitable, should take place with as little disturbance as possible of the good relations of the two countries. I have, therefore, observed with regret that of late the negotiations have not made much progress and that there is on both sides some evidence of anxiety as to the result.

It has been suggested in many quarters that my Government should offer its good offices, but they have very properly, and with my full concurrence, abstained from interference in a question of much delicacy with which the parties are themselves thoroughly competent to deal.

[1] Princess Ingeborg—Crown Princess of Sweden.

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There is, however, no reason why, as one closely connected by relationships with our families concerned, and as a well-wisher of both countries, I should not offer my personal opinion upon what I conceive to be the essential point at issue.

The position as I understand it is as follows: Sweden has very properly insisted that as a preliminary to her formal recognition of the dissolution, certain matters should first be settled in strict accordance with the constitution of the dual monarchy.

Norway on her side admits that no final settlement can be come to until the result of the Referendum[1] has been officially reported to your Father, until a negotiation has been concluded between the two countries upon the basis of the conditions laid down by Sweden, and until the King, your Father, has definitely renounced the Norwegian throne. The provisional Government suggests, however, that the negotiations are not likely to lead to a satisfactory issue unless Charles of Denmark is allowed to take a leading part in them. It is to this premature recognition of Charles that I understand the Swedish Government take exception. They dwell with much force upon the impropriety of selecting a new Sovereign in anticipation of the issue of the negotiations and without the approval of the Swedish Diet. It seems to me, on the other hand, that there is something to be said for allowing the Norwegian Government to associate Charles with themselves at this comparatively early stage in the negotiations. I am assuming that your Father has no intention of allowing a Bernadotte Prince to come forward, and that he does not look unfavourably upon the candidature of Charles of Denmark. It is needless for me to say that I should regard his selection with warm approval, not only on account of his close connection with my family, but because his acceptation of the throne would make it easy for my Government to afford to the two Kingdoms, perhaps in a shape even better suited to their requirements, the Guarantees which since 1855 Great Britain has given to the Dual Monarchy. In these circumstances, might it not be as well that some kind of provisional recognition should at the outset be accorded, or at least not refused, to Charles by the Swedish Government, for the same reasons as those which have induced them to recognise and to transact business with the Provisional Government which now, for the time being, controls the affairs of Norway? Of course, his position would be irregular, but it would not be more irregular than that of the existing Norwegian Government and might lead to a speedier

[1] On 13th August a plebiscite of the voters in Norway was almost unanimously in favour of the dissolution of the union, but the future form of the government was left undefined, and relations between the two countries became strained almost to the breaking point.

termination of the transitional period which is causing so much unrest at the present moment. To me it certainly seems that the negotiations which are now being carried on would stand a better chance of success if they were to proceed with the full knowledge of "the Prince" who, unless I greatly misapprehend your Father's views, will in all probability find himself eventually called to the Norwegian throne, and this at any rate would be more satisfactory than the creation of a Republic.

Believe me, my dear Gustav, your very affectionate cousin,

EDWARD R.I.

The Crown Prince of Sweden in reply (August 16) called attention to the complexities of the situation, and was critical in comment of King Edward's view. He defined clearly and in firm but moderate language the attitude of the Swedish Government, declining to discuss the question of a candidature until a bilateral arrangement had been come to for the dissolution of the Union. King Edward acknowledged the "kind letter" with the expression of a sincere hope "that all will end satisfactorily for the different countries concerned" (August 25).

The King having done all that he could do to ensure the success of Prince Charles's candidature was now more satisfied with the state of affairs and "prepared to let matters take their natural course." Lord Lansdowne now authorised Johnstone to inform the Danish Government that "England would recognise with the utmost pleasure any provisional arrangement under Prince Charles which might be acceptable to the three Governments concerned, but that as the question of procedure to be followed is still under discussion between Sweden and Norway, it would be preferable for the present to avoid making any announcement which might add to the difficulty of the negotiation." The King approved the draft letter but wished the words "provided it is" inserted after the words "provisional arrangement."

Johnstone now thought that the time was approaching when Norway, after preliminary negotiations with Sweden, would elect Prince Charles, "and then the question will arise whether the Danish Royal Family and Government will allow H.R.H. to accept and proceed." But the King wisely held that it was better to allow the Scandinavian negotiations to take their own course, though Wedel, the Norwegian Minister in Copenhagen, was at his wits' end by September, and was very anxious that King Edward should again use his influence. If only Britain, Wedel urged in

a memorandum which the King received on 9th September, would guarantee Denmark against disturbance by sea in case Prince Charles was elected, the hesitation of the Danish Crown Prince would vanish. "Norway," he wrote, "looks for help after three months of patience. Norway wants to be England's friend; will not England help her a little? The goodwill of King Edward will never be forgotten, and surely England would not regret to follow his far-seeing politics. What must be done, must be done quickly, as every day brings new complications" But the King wisely did not answer, leaving that task to Lord Lansdowne, who was of the opinion that "Baron Wedel has throughout attempted to force our hands." Sweden, he affirmed, was not contemplating war, and to Wedel's suggestion that England should promise support to Denmark and Norway in case trouble with Sweden should follow an attempt to impose Prince Charles's candidature, Lord Lansdowne replied that the British Government would give no such guarantee.

Two days later (September 14) the King wrote to Lansdowne:

Many thanks for your letter of 12th instant.

There is no doubt, according to Baron Wedel's account, that Norway is very anxious for England's as well as Denmark's support, and I should be sorry if he thought my Government were lukewarm in the matter.

At the same time, I quite see that our position *vis-à-vis* of Sweden is a very difficult one. It is however to be hoped that Sweden will settle soon her differences with Norway, so as to avoid further complications or a conflict of any kind.

I shall, I hope, receive an account of Sir T. Sanderson's interview with Dr. Nansen,[1] but I certainly thought that bringing you over to London from Ireland before your holiday was over would have been very hard upon you. . . .

The next day he received Sanderson's account of his interview with Nansen, and again wrote to Lansdowne:

Sanderson has sent me an account of his interview with Dr. Nansen which seems to me most satisfactory, and that

[1] In September Dr. Nansen, the explorer, came to London on behalf of the Norwegian provisional government further to discuss the difficulties. Lord Lansdowne was away at Dereen, Ireland, and Nansen was seen by Sir T. Sanderson, the Permanent Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Nansen expressed to him his fear of a war with Sweden, and asked England's guarantee of support if Prince Charles became King of Norway.

Sanderson has been able to cope with all the difficulties surrounding such an interview without your having to make the long journey to London.

Most sincerely do I hope that there will be no hostilities between Sweden and Norway, and I am inclined to think that there is considerable "bluffing" regarding the former.

Still, I think it would be our duty to offer arbitration collectively with the Great Powers should really there be any chance of what virtually I can only look upon as a Civil War.

By now the two states had decided that a conference was necessary to define the boundaries and other relations between the disunited countries. The Conference continued to 23rd September, during which there were many times of stress, and war threatened. But an agreement was at length reached and was ratified by the Norwegian Storthing on 9th October. The formalities for the dissolution of the two countries were thereupon quickly completed. The Swedish Riksdag on 16th October passed an act acknowledging the separation, and on the 27th King Oscar addressed a letter to the Norwegian Storthing renouncing the Norwegian throne and recognising Norway's complete independence.

Meanwhile Prince Charles of Denmark informed King Edward that he was still unwilling to go to Norway unless summoned by a popular vote on a referendum. He might, however, accept an invitation from the Storthing, if the Danish Foreign Minister placed on formal record his own preference for a popular vote. "Prince Charles regarded such a document as essential for himself in view of possible future political complications in Norway." [1]

On 25th October the Storthing proposed Prince Charles of Denmark as King of Norway, and on 18th November, after a referendum which decided in his favour by a large majority, the Storthing unanimously elected him King. A week later the Danish Prince, as King Haakon VII., with his consort, Queen Maud, made his formal entry into Christiania.[2] Thus the

[1] Johnstone to Knollys, 20th October.

[2] The new King of Norway was anxious that his first visit to a foreign Court should be to England, and a report in May 1906 that the Kaiser was on the point of inviting the new King to Berlin led the latter to offer a visit to England in the autumn and to invite King Edward's authority for a statement that he could visit no foreign Court "until he had been to England." Accordingly,

tangle was satisfactorily straightened out. Norway welcomed the King's son-in-law as her new monarch, and Alan Johnstone received the K.C V O.[1]

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the King and Queen of Norway, with their son Prince Olaf, arrived at Windsor on 12th November 1906 on a state visit to King Edward, which lasted a month. All the honours due to a reigning sovereign were bestowed on the Norwegian monarch. King Edward invested him with the Order of the Garter, and the Freedom of the City of London was bestowed on him on 14th November.

CHAPTER XIV

KING EDWARD AND THE NAVY

I

One of the most characteristic traits of King Edward was, as we have seen, his tendency to place his entire reliance on one or two men where questions of special import were concerned. In the Norwegian crisis he had placed his confidence in Lord Lansdowne and the Hon. Alan Johnstone; in matters connected with the army he placed much faith in the views of General Sir T. Kelly-Kenny; and in the affairs of the navy, in which the King showed perhaps an even greater interest, the man to whom he now turned for information was Admiral Sir John Fisher.

At the King's accession Fisher, who had entered the navy in 1854 at the age of thirteen, and had served continuously for well-nigh half a century, was Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. In 1902 he was recalled to the Admiralty to serve as Second Sea Lord under the Earl of Selborne. There he quickly made his reforming zeal felt. He devised a new system of naval education, and sketched out a scheme for rendering the fleet an effective weapon of war which should be ready to strike at a moment's notice. At his own request he was transferred in 1903 from the post of Second Sea Lord to the Command-in-Chief at Portsmouth, but while holding that office he was busily engaged in drafting further plans of reorganising the fighting forces of the country. Although he cherished a fiery faith in the navy as the really effective arm of the country's defence, he accepted a seat on the committee of three which, under Lord Esher's chairmanship, was empowered to reform the War Office.

In Fisher tempestuous energy was combined with exceptional

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powers of work and technical knowledge, and habits of rapid decision. Of masterful temperament, he was intolerant of opposition or criticism, and was merciless in his treatment of what he deemed slackness or incompetence. He held an almost fanatical faith in his country's divinely-appointed mission to command the seas, and believed himself capable, if he were allowed a free hand, of bringing the navy to an irresistible pitch of efficiency. Fisher's vehemence in talk and his exuberant professions of loyalty to the Crown appealed to the King, who became a stout supporter of the Admiral's general policy, while shrewdly recognising his tendencies to violent self-assertion and extravagant emphasis.

In the early months of 1904 Fisher initiated his long series of pungent and breezy letters to Lord Knollys which the King read with interest. Fisher did not always stick to his last, and his opinion on the King's position as constitutional sovereign and on the various moves in current party politics, all expressed with considerable vigour, give an indication of his versatility. The King, although he appreciated Fisher's views on naval matters, was by no means tempted to give the same consideration to his political views, which he dubbed "effusions"!

In the course of 1904, largely under Fisher's inspiration, a reform in the distribution and methods of mobilising the Fleet was considered by the Admiralty. Obsolete ships were to be scrapped. New bases for the fleet were to be instituted. The Home Fleet was to become the Channel Fleet of 12 battleships, and the old Channel Fleet converted into the Atlantic Fleet of 8 battleships with its base at Gibraltar; but the Mediterranean Fleet of 8 battleships was to retain its base at Malta. These and other changes were early pressed on the King's notice by Fisher, who urged that "instant readiness for war" was imperative. He described his reorganisation scheme as "Napoleonic in its audacity, and Cromwellian in its thoroughness," and added that unless naval reform were "ruthless and remorseless . . . we may as well pack up and hand over to Germany."[1] The King agreed, though he was careful not to trespass into what was really Admiralty territory.

In the autumn of 1904 Fisher succeeded Lord Walter Kerr as First Sea Lord of the Admiralty. Fisher's educational and

[1] Fisher to Knollys, 19th August 1904.

strategic schemes were only part of the wholesale reform of the navy which he had in view. Lord Selborne, the First Lord, acknowledged the need of Fisher's largely-conceived measures, but the energetic Admiral urged that the King's personal influence was necessary to the complete fulfilment of his designs. As First Sea Lord he could enjoy no special right of personal intercourse with the sovereign, which he regarded as essential. In order to regularise the situation Lord Selborne suggested that Fisher, at the same time as he became First Sea Lord, should be appointed first or principal naval aide-de-camp to the King, a post which carried with it the right of access to the sovereign. Its holder at the time, Admiral Sir Henry Stephenson, who had been a member of the King's household since 1878, and aide-de-camp since 1902, was now transferred to the office of Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod. Accordingly, with the somewhat hesitating approval of the King "for reasons given," Admiral Sir John Fisher, on 21st October 1904, entered upon the two offices that he was to retain jointly for practically the rest of the King's reign. Thenceforward Fisher's influence with the King on naval matters was paramount.

The King's tendencies in the matter of the services were hardly inclined to conservatism, but it was with a conditional eagerness that he backed up Fisher's stormy zeal. At many points he offered cautious counsel. When in November 1904 the First Lord of the Admiralty submitted to him in its final form the newly devised scheme of change, the King wrote (November 16) that,

> as far as I can judge, the proposals, which I have carefully studied, seem to me to be admirable. But the whole matter should be kept secret; the leakage which occurs in the public offices is much to be deplored. Admiralty evidently on good terms with *Daily Express*.

In spite of the King's caveat, the scheme, which was accepted almost in its entirety by the Admiralty, was published on 10th December in a circular letter to commanders of squadrons and in a memorandum presented to Parliament by the First Lord, and it was announced that the redistribution of the fleets was to be tested in the following year by progressive manœuvres.

But in spite of the practical acceptance of his scheme of reform Fisher was dissatisfied with the treatment that was meted out to

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him by the Conservative government, and on 3rd March 1905 he sent to the King a copy of a letter he was sending to Mr. Balfour offering his resignation. "Fisher," he announced, "will glide away, doesn't get on with Long,"[1] and he added gleefully that he was going to be the head of a combine of "the greatest shipping and armour plate and gun making firms in the country" with "£20,000 a year and Dictatorship"! But the King was opposed to any such step, and in the event Fisher remained—with the added dignity of the Order of Merit which the King conferred upon him on his own initiative in the following month.

II

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With the accession of the Liberal party to power in 1905 there was a fear that economy rather than efficiency would rule the waves. At first the Liberal government adhered to its predecessor's naval policy, and a net decrease of £1,520,000 in the estimates as introduced in March 1906 was in accordance with Lord Cawdor's proposals before leaving office. But the Government, with Fisher's approval, subsequently reduced the building programme. One Dreadnought was struck off from the four projected, besides three destroyers and four submarines. The King viewed with dismay this further reduction, and when on 10th July 1906 Campbell-Bannerman reported to him that the Admiralty wanted three Dreadnoughts laid down, but that the Chancellor of the Exchequer held that even if France and Germany combined against England no such addition was needed, and that the Hague Conference would be helped if this country practised moderation, the King added the comment, "Evidently the cheese-paring policy of the Government is also to be extended to the navy."

Before the Conservative government left office it approved of the construction at Portsmouth of the first Dreadnought, a momentous innovation in battleships. Its displacement of 17,900 tons and its speed of 21 knots exceeded anything in previous experience. She carried ten 12-in. guns so mounted as to facilitate all-round fire, and twenty-six 12-pounder or quick-firing guns for defence. Her main armour belt reached a thickness

[1] Mr. Walter (afterwards Lord) Long, who was then President of the Local Government Board.

of 11 inches and her construction protected her in great measure from underwater explosions. The keel plate of the first battleship of this formidable design was laid on 2nd October 1905, and she was launched in presence of the King on 10th February 1906. Her armament was sufficiently advanced to be inspected by the King and the Prince of Wales on 4th August. The construction of this latest leviathan was expedited for the benefit of similar sister ships, and she left Portsmouth for her steam and gun trials 1st October 1906—trials which proved in every way satisfactory. The Admiralty now committed itself fully to the Dreadnought policy by laying down and completing within the next two years two more of these huge vessels.

These naval preparations of Great Britain, combined with the German defeat at the Algeciras Conference, gave German Chauvinists the argument they needed to urge with increased vehemence the necessity of great additions to their navy, and under the stimulus of the propaganda of the German Navy League the Reichstag received favourably the Naval Bill of 1906, which provided for a great increase in the German navy and for the enlargement of the Kiel Canal.

III

Fisher was now viewing with alarm the increases in the German navy, and, in order to meet the threat, urged the combination of the Atlantic and Channel fleets into a "North Sea fleet." These new concentration proposals roused a good deal of service opposition, news of which reached the King, but Fisher was indefatigable in endeavours personally to convince the King of the necessity for the change. As was his custom, he reiterated his belief of the necessity of the King's personal support to ensure the success of his energetic plans.

Much of the opposition to the proposals was due to the fact that the motives behind them were not fully understood. One of the first of the senior officers of the navy to ask Sir John Fisher for a fuller explanation was the Prince of Wales. Sir John, with the King's approval, now (October 23, 1906) wrote fully to the Prince, giving the "absolute facts of the case." "Our only probable enemy," he wrote, "is Germany. Germany keeps her *whole* fleet always concentrated within a few hours of England. We must, therefore, keep a fleet twice as powerful concentrated

within a few hours of Germany." He urged that the only way to obtain this new "Home Fleet" was by moving six battleships and four armoured cruisers from the Channel, Mediterranean, and Atlantic fleets (which were "fifty per cent stronger than the present political situation demands") and combining them with the best of the battleships and cruisers now in commission in reserve, thus forming an *Escadre d'Élite* "Admiral Bridgeman (about the best Admiral we have) is to be the Commander-in-Chief of this new Home Fleet with his headquarters at the Nore and his cruising ground the North Sea, *where the fight will be!* perhaps off the Heligoland (which was won by the sword and given up by the pen!). . . . Pure party feeling," he added, "solely dictates the present 'press' agitation" for increased naval estimates. He concluded with a typical comment. "Reduced navy estimates are no sign of reduced naval efficiency. On the contrary, swollen estimates engender parasites both in men and ships which hamper the fighting qualities of the fleet. The pruning knife ain't pleasant for fossils and ineffectives but it has to be used, and the tree is more vigorous for the loss of excrescences."

That day the Prince of Wales sent for Sir John Fisher, and after further conversation expressed his cordial agreement with the Admiralty. The opposition to Sir John's proposals now came from retired admirals and civil servants. Among these latter was Sir Charles Hardinge, who, writing from the Foreign Office to the King early in November, doubted the prudence of Fisher's policy, and suggested that cases might happen in which injury to British interests in distant parts of the world would occur owing to the absence of a vessel of war. Fisher at once retorted with a long letter to the King urging that

> the absolute fact is that the Admiralty always know better than the Foreign Office, and more wisely than the Consuls, when vessels are likely to be required, because the Naval Officer on the spot is invariably a better and more reliable judge than the frightened or gunboat-desiring Consuls, who one and all pine for the prestige of the presence of a Man-of-War within signalling distance of the Consular flagstaff and for the Consular salute of seven guns!

He pointed out that not one single cruiser, large or small, had been or would be withdrawn from either the Mediterranean or

any foreign station, nor was there any intention of so doing; and that the present disposition of vessels had existed for two years without a single case of default on the part of the Admiralty to meet Foreign Office requirements. In a footnote he stated that Germany was bent on an early war.

The German Empire is the one Power in political organisation and in fighting strength and in fighting efficiency, where one man (the Kaiser) can press the button and be confident of hurling the whole force of the Empire instantly, irresistibly, and without warning on its enemy. The German button will only be pressed as regards the British Empire when the Channel and Atlantic Fleets are absent at sea from the vicinity of German waters.

Hence all his energies were concentrated on preparing for the event.

The King was in a very difficult position. He had every confidence in Sir Charles Hardinge, and every confidence in Sir John Fisher. Their views were diametrically opposed, and the King himself had not that knowledge of naval strategy and organisation without which any judgement would have been a mere academic expression of opinion. Eventually, however, he approved of Fisher's views, and was pleased to hear from the redoubtable sailor on 1st January 1907 that his reforms had been accepted by the cabinet, and that the Channel, Atlantic, and Mediterranean fleets would be reconstructed in March 1907, after the Lagos manœuvres. Lord Fisher acknowledged cordially that the "splendid support" given to him by the King had made his position impregnable, and that henceforth the "fighting efficiency of our Fleet and its instant readiness for war" would receive no check.[1]

[1] "He gave me his unfaltering support right through unswervingly, though every sycophantic effort was exhausted in an endeavour to alienate him from his support of me. He quite enjoyed the numberless communications he got, and the more outrageous the calumnies the more he revelled in my reputed wickedness! I can't very well put some of them on paper, but the Minotaur wasn't in it with me! Also, I was a Malay! I was the son of a Cingalese Princess—hence my wicked cunning and duplicity! I had formed a syndicate and bought all the land round Rosyth before the Government fixed on it as a Naval Base—hence my wealth! How the King enjoyed my showing him my private income as given to the Income-Tax Commissioners was £382, 6s. 11d., after the legal charges for income-tax, annuities, etc., were subtracted from the total private income of £750!"—Fisher's *Memories*, pp. 1-2.

CHAPTER XV

GERMANY AND MOROCCO, 1905–1906

I

EVEN with the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, which ended the hostilities between Russia and Japan, there seemed to be little prospect of a settled peace. Europe was like a vast powder magazine which a spark might ignite with the direst results. The rapid growth of jealous suspicion between Germany and Britain, the rising hope of France to recover from Germany the provinces which had been wrested from her in 1870, and the developing ambition of the Balkan States to free themselves of Turkish suzerainty and Austrian influence, were all aggressive sentiments which threatened a well-nigh universal conflagration. Even Russia, maimed as she was, had not given up the idea of stemming the swelling tide of internal revolution by territorial expansion. In Germany, France, and Russia there were active leaders of public opinion who preached the doctrine that war could alone solve the international discord. Germany was the storm centre, not only on account of her geographical position, but also owing to her truculence and her inveterate habit of boastful assertion of her military strength.

As might have been expected, the conflict between British and German policy, which had been accentuated during the Russo-Japanese war, by no means improved the relations between the King and the Kaiser, and the tension was increased by a war scare between their two countries which found a virulent outlet in the popular press. The King could not conceive how the war scare had originated, and in a long interview on 12th January 1905 with Captain Coerper, the German Naval Attaché in London, he endeavoured to exercise his emollient influence.

"His Majesty," Captain Coerper reported that day to Count von Bülow, "was gracious enough to-day to ask me for an interview, during the course of which he spoke about the war scare. He said that he could not understand how it was that Germany had come to anticipate an attack by England, whereupon I remarked that it was probably due to the appearance of certain newspaper articles combined with the recent redistribution of the English navy. His Majesty replied that the Press was as mad in all countries; and instanced what the St. Petersburg newspapers had recently written about England, which was quite untrue. He told me I could inform the Kaiser of the following matters; in the first place, he was determined to keep peace with all nations; and secondly, England would never prepare a war with any nation, least of all with Germany, for the simple reason that there was no cause for such a thing, and that such a war between the two nations would do infinite injury to both. The King added that he had intended to show England's friendly attitude to Germany by his last summer's visit to Kiel, and pointed out that the Navy had been reorganised by Sir John Fisher because of the imperative necessity for this, and not because of any intended hostility, though it had been necessary to remember the great increase in the strength of the German Navy, which was considered in England to be far greater than the needs of Germany warranted.[1]

But the swelling tide of international rancour could not be abated by fair words, and the Kaiser's cool reception of King Edward's pacific phrases deepened the King's distrust of his nephew. Matters did not improve in the following months, and even such an event as the German Crown Prince's engagement early in 1905 to the Duchess Cecilia, sister of the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, indirectly contributed to the general apprehension. King Edward had agreed in March that the Prince of Wales should represent him at the wedding in June, but a fortnight later the arrangement was cancelled ostensibly on the ground that the King of Spain would be visiting England at the time.[2] Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin, was greatly perturbed by the contretemps:

"It is the first time in history," he wrote to Lord Knollys (March 24, 1905) "that a German Crown Prince is married

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xix. ii. p. 379.

[2] The King of Spain was to arrive at Windsor 5th June, and the Berlin marriage was fixed for 6th June.

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(neither his father nor his grandfather were Crown Princes when they were married), and the presence of the Prince of Wales would certainly have been most highly appreciated. It is perhaps the more unfortunate that the Prince of Wales should be prevented from coming, as the Emperor has more than once alluded to His Royal Highness's apparent reluctance to visit Berlin, and to the fact that he has not yet had an opportunity of visiting his German regiment, of which he was appointed Colonel three years ago. . . . You tell me," continued Lascelles, "that the King is full of distrust of the Emperor, and this is only natural after what we know of his attempts to sow distrust of us in other nations and more especially in America . . . Whilst we are quite right to be on our guard with respect to his intrigues with foreign countries, we should do our best, in the real interests of the two countries, to remain on good terms with him. It is, therefore, in my opinion, most unfortunate that the King of Spain's visit to England should clash with the Royal marriage here."

But Sir Frank Lascelles' arguments had no effect and the Prince of Wales remained in England for the King of Spain's visit, with the result that the relations between the British and German courts were strained even further.

II

A question of international importance now arose that threatened to antagonise not only the King and the Kaiser, but the whole of Western Europe—the question of the future of Morocco. Geographically three great Powers had, as neighbours, direct concern with Moroccan affairs—Great Britain as the ruler of Gibraltar, France as the owner of the adjoining territory of Algeria, and Spain as the possessor of a settlement at Melilla on the Mediterranean coast, and as the nearest European Power. Twenty-five years earlier, when the Powers of Europe framed collectively a Convention with the Moroccan government which defined the rights of foreign representatives and settlers, Prince Bismarck had freely admitted that Germany had no substantial interests in Morocco, and that only the three Western Powers were directly concerned. Even in 1904 Count von Bülow, when he first learned of the Anglo-French Moroccan Agreement, had declared the affairs of Morocco to be outside German interest. But in 1905 Germany suddenly and aggressively demanded a

place in the sun, and decided that the warm Moroccan sunshine was admirably suited to the German temperament. The abrupt German move was resisted by the newly formed Entente Cordiale, and for the moment the calm of Europe seemed likely to be replaced by the storm-clouds of war.

There were many motives behind Germany's sudden move, not least of which was the desire of German Chauvinists to upset the Anglo-French entente and to discomfort M. Delcassé, whom they rightly regarded as one of its prime creators. Delcassé was still convinced that he had been right in choosing an entente with England in preference to the entente repeatedly offered to him by the Germans. He had listened attentively to the German proposals, but realised that they contained but little of value to France. With Britain, however, it was different. She had offered something immediately in return for similar concessions, and had proved ready to conclude a business arrangement on the give-and-take principle. In these circumstances he naturally sealed the entente with Great Britain, and in concluding it he had to sacrifice nothing which his countrymen regarded as vital to French interests. No doubt they did not like giving up their traditional claim to paramount influence in Egypt, but they were enabled to build up a North-West African Empire, which was for them of far greater importance than the valley of the Nile. As practical politicians they had to choose between friction in Egypt or supremacy in Morocco. They chose the latter.

All this had naturally produced a good deal of irritation in Berlin. For years the Kaiser had been courting France, and, with the self-confidence which was one of his prominent characteristics, felt sure that his talents of *charmeur* would ultimately overcome her coyness and suspicion. Delcassé had the audacity to destroy, or at least to shake, that illusion. It is probable that from the moment the Anglo-French entente was established the decision was taken in Berlin that Delcassé must be struck down. In order, however, to make the blow more effectual, it was delayed for a year. The Eastern ally of France had first to be thoroughly beaten and crippled in Manchuria and the Pacific, and Delcassé had to be given rope wherewith to hang himself. Unfortunately Delcassé used the rope offered to him, for he continued to carry out his policy as if—to

use an expression of William II. himself—Germany were a *quantité négligeable,* while he failed to urge his own government to be prepared for a menace on the Eastern frontier More than once he received warnings from various quarters, but to these hints and warning Delcassé had always one answer, "Quant à Berlin, il n'y a rien à craindre de ce côté là"!

The Kaiser was now becoming more and more irritated against Delcassé personally—partly by his energetic policy in North Africa, and partly by his treating Germany as a *quantité négligeable.* Whatever had happened lately seemed to benefit the entente, and Germany was making no comparable progress in world politics. At last the fiat went forth that the dismissal of Delcassé must be brought about somehow *coûte que coûte.* The apparently placid acceptance by Germany of the Anglo-French Convention of 1904 had seemed to indicate that Germany recognised the special position and interest of the Third Republic in the disorderly and backward Shereefian Empire lying next to Algeria. With Russia now out of action, the aim was to smash the entente by an ultimatum to France such as had never been addressed by one Great Power to another. German interests in Morocco were to provide the pretext, and on 12th March 1905 Count von Bülow declared for the first time in the Reichstag the urgent need of asserting German influence, both economically and politically, in Morocco.

At the time the internal condition of Morocco was not improving. The tribes in the interior of the country were still defying the Sultan's authority, while a French mission at Fez was urging on the reluctant Sultan economic and civil reforms which had been authorised by the Anglo-French agreement. The general unsettlement gave Germany her opportunity for a practical protest. Interference on Germany's part was congenial to the Kaiser, and he readily agreed with Bülow's suggestion that he should play a leading part in asserting Germany's title to exert influence in Moroccan affairs.

The Kaiser opened the campaign with a somewhat ambiguous speech at Bremen on 22nd March, at a banquet after unveiling an equestrian statue of his father. It was no "empty world dominion" to which he aspired. He looked forward to a "world-wide dominion of the Hohenzollerns," and in a bombastic peroration he declared that God had destined Germany for a

great future. "We are the salt of the earth, but we must also prove ourselves worthy of this high calling."

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Although defiant and pacific notes were curiously tangled in this utterance, it clearly implied a challenge. A week later Count von Bülow in the Reichstag announced that Germany, being uncertain as to the effect on commerce of French action in Morocco, which England had approved, was about to open direct negotiations with the Sultan, and the Kaiser himself had undertaken to perform the delicate duty. Already in February the Kaiser had designed a sea trip from Lisbon to Sicily in the interests of his son's health. He now planned to extend the tour to include Tangier in the itinerary, where he would appear as the operatic champion of Moroccan independence. There are few more touching spectacles in history than the degree to which hostility to England and France reconciled the Kaiser to the noble cause of the self-determination of small nationalities. The Kaiser subsequently asserted that he acted solely on the advice of his minister,[1] but such a personal interposition in what proved to be a European crisis undoubtedly appealed strongly to his theatrical love of display, and to his desire to antagonise England and France.

It was from Lisbon that the Kaiser proceeded to Tangier, where he landed on 31st March, and spent two hours at the German Legation. The Sultan's uncle, Mulay Abd-el-Malik, met him on landing and preceded the Kaiser, who was insecurely mounted on a white charger, on his way to the German Legation.[2] In public and in private the Kaiser spoke menacingly. He was determined, he told the German colony, to uphold "the interests of the Fatherland in a free country. The Empire has great and

[1] Later, when von Bülow offered to resign, the Kaiser wrote: "I have done everything for you. I have risked a great deal on your behalf. If you leave me now I shall commit suicide. . . . At your request I risked my life. With my bad arm I rode through the streets of Morocco and made a demonstration all for you." (Private information from Count von Kessler.)

[2] When the Kaiser was speaking of his visit to Tangier to Sir Charles Hardinge, who accompanied King Edward to Cronberg in 1906, he represented that he was warmly received by British and Spanish residents, who welcomed him as their deliverer from French oppression. He added that British rights and interests were overridden by the French, who treated the country as their own. (Hardinge to Grey, August 16, 1906.) (See Schwertfeger, ii. p. 53, who quotes a report from the Belgian representative at Tangier, saying that the natives welcomed the Kaiser as a deliverer from the French, and that the English and Spanish colonies were almost as eager as the German to do him honour.)

growing interests in Morocco. Commerce can only progress if all the Powers are considered to have equal rights under the sovereignty of the Sultan and respect the independence of the country. My visit is the recognition of this independence." It was a bold effort to break up the Anglo-French agreement of the previous year, and there seemed no question at the moment to doubt his resolve of fulfilling his purpose, although the sword might prove the only instrument.[1]

The Kaiser's dramatic visit to Tangier excited King Edward's wrath Writing from Palma, Majorca, to Lord Lansdowne, on 15th April 1905, he said:

> I have received from Prince Louis of Battenberg notes of conversation which he had recently with German Emperor, at Gibraltar. So interesting and important that I send them to you and should like Balfour to see them. Please return them. The Tangier incident was the most mischievous and uncalled for event which the German Emperor has ever been engaged in since he came to the Throne. It was also a political theatrical fiasco, and if he thinks he has done himself good in the eyes of the world he is very much mistaken. He is no more nor less than a political "enfant terrible" and one can have no faith in any of his assurances. His own pleasure seems to wish to set every country by the ears. These annual cruises are deeply to be deplored, and mischief is their only object. I was much amused at hearing that in the motley crew of his guests, forty in number, there were nine retired Admirals amongst them!

The King was not alone in his opinion, and the Belgian minister in London, Count de Lalaing, reported that in London the conviction was general "that in going to Tangier the Emperor meant to read a lesson, not only to France, but also to France's friends."

[1] From Tangier the *Hohenzollern* carried the Kaiser on a second visit to Gibraltar. There had been negotiations with King Edward as to the character of his reception there, and the Kaiser had assured Lascelles that no elaborate ceremonial was desired. At Gibraltar the Kaiser had a conversation with Prince Louis of Battenberg, Prince Louis's notes on which seemed to the King "so interesting and important" that he sent them to Lord Lansdowne for him to show to Mr. Balfour. From Gibraltar the Imperial yacht passed to Naples, where there was a meeting with the King of Italy on 6th April, and from Naples the Kaiser went on to Corfu.

III

It would seem paradoxical that the King whilst on one of his own annual cruises should "deeply deplore" similar excursions on the part of the Kaiser, but whereas the Kaiser's foreign visits often intensified existing friction, those of King Edward proved to have an emollient effect. When the King had planned his Mediterranean cruise for April 1905, the Prime Minister had assured him (March 13) that the political situation was calm and that there was nothing to interfere with his well-earned holiday. Consequently he left London on 6th April for Marseilles, spending a few hours *en route* with President Loubet in Paris.

"President Loubet," the King wrote to Lord Lansdowne from Majorca on 14th April, "was most amiable . . . but I could see from his manner that he considers the German conduct at Tangier, if not a direct menace to France, at any rate a covert insult. However, no further notice will be taken of it."

At Marseilles the King joined the Queen on board the *Victoria and Albert*. There followed "a most enjoyable cruise in the Balearic Islands in lovely weather. The scenery in Majorca," he wrote to Lord Lansdowne, "is particularly wild and fine. The authorities and people of these islands have received us with the greatest possible kindness and courtesy. This evening (April 14) we leave for Algiers, which we should reach to-morrow morning. I have never been there, and believe there is much of interest to be seen."

The Governor-General of Algiers, M. Jonnart, visited the King on board his yacht on his arrival on the 16th, and the King landed, with Prince Charles of Denmark, to return M. Jonnart's visit and to receive an address of welcome from the Mayor. From Philippeville, on the Algerian coast, the King passed to Alghero, Sardinia, on 25th April. On the 28th the *Victoria and Albert* reached Marseilles on the return journey, and the King arrived in Paris next day, when he paid a short informal visit to President Loubet at the Élysée.

Earlier in the year—in January—there had been a change of government in France, M. Rouvier succeeding M. Combes as President of the Council. M. Delcassé, however, retained his

post as Foreign Minister, and there was no sign of change in the country's foreign policy. In spite of the Tangier episode Delcassé had resolved to allow no German interference with France's position in Morocco, and was not a little perturbed to learn that the German Minister in Morocco was now persuading the Sultan to invite a conference of all the European Powers signatory to the Madrid Convention of 1880, with a view to decide the future of his country. Delcassé made it plain that France would reject any such suggestion, but his colleagues, however gently, deprecated defiant action, and on 21st April he offered his resignation, which he withdrew two days later The British Ambassador, Sir Francis Bertie, had reported to the King (April 22, 1905) a remark of Delcassé's that the German government were "turning him out," but the Ambassador also stated that the French government was "solid on Morocco." Whatever happened it looked as if a Franco-German clash could not be avoided.

On 30th April the King dined with the President at the Élyseé, and in a subsequent interview with M. Delcassé strongly supported his views. On 1st May the King visited Versailles, attended the races at St. Cloud, and a performance of M. Levedan's *Le Duel* at the Théâtre Français. On 3rd May, after visiting the Paris Salon, he lunched with his old friend the Marquis de Breteuil, and among the guests was again M. Delcassé, with whom he had a long conversation. He returned to London on 5th May.

The King's visit to Paris in May 1905, the programme of which followed old precedents, excited the quidnuncs The air, according to the Belgian Minister, was "still electrified by the events at Tangier." The King had informed Sir Francis Bertie that he wished the visit to be quite private without any reception, and only wished to meet a few personal friends. Although the King found much beside politics to occupy him, the notion prevailed that his intention was conspicuously to reaffirm the solidarity of the entente in the face of a German menace.

On 11th May Lord Lansdowne wrote to Lord Knollys: "The King's Mediterranean tour left matters in excellent shape so far as we are concerned." But the calm was merely the prelude to a storm that was to burst over the unfortunate Delcassé's head.

The King had not concealed from Delcassé his resentment of the Kaiser's demonstration at Tangier, and when he met Prince

Radolin, the German Ambassador, at the President's dinner at the Élysée, he frankly spoke of the dangerous situation which his nephew was provoking.

A fortnight later the Sultan of Morocco, presuming on German friendship and acting under German influence, rejected the French scheme of internal reform, and on 3rd June he invited the Powers to join in a conference to decide the future of his country. Germany eagerly announced her acceptance of the invitation. Great Britain replied with a refusal, but added the proviso that, should France see her way to assent, she would act with her. Italy and Spain took the same attitude as Great Britain, and made their assent to the conference dependent on France's decision, while the United States declared they would follow England's lead.

In accordance with M. Delcassé's decisive counsel, France refused the Sultan's invitation to take part in a conference. Prince Radolin, the German Ambassador in Paris, now made it clear to M. Rouvier, the French Prime Minister, that Germany was behind Morocco, and his threatening language was thought to imply that if France persisted in opposing the conference, Germany would resort to the coercion of war. M. Delcassé's colleagues (M. Loubet alone supporting Delcassé) deemed it inopportune to accept Germany's challenge, and, bowing to the storm, M. Delcassé resigned on 6th June. The overthrow of the Foreign Minister who was mainly responsible for the Anglo-French entente was regarded in Germany and elsewhere as a triumph for German diplomacy, and the Kaiser celebrated the victory by conferring the title of Prince on the Chancellor who had directed the campaign.

France was staggered by the gravity of the menace and by the violence of an insult never afterwards forgotten or forgiven. Britain was prepared with all her strength to support France if necessary, but the Rouvier cabinet yielded and accepted the German demand for an international conference, and Delcassé, the statesman who had held office for seven years—longer than any other Foreign Minister under the Third Republic—was practically dismissed by Germany. But his work and policy survived him, and the result of the Kaiser's furious hammer blows on the entente was only to rivet it more firmly. For the moment, however, Germany's diplomatic triumph was complete. France

had given way at the crucial moment. As Mr. Balfour pointed out to the King on 8th June:

> Delcassé's dismissal or resignation under pressure from the German Government displayed a weakness on the part of France which indicated that she could not at present be counted on as an effective force in international politics. She could no longer be trusted not to yield to threats at the critical moment of a negotiation. If, therefore, Germany is really desirous of obtaining a port on the coast of Morocco, and if such a proceeding be a menace to our interests, it must be to other means than French assistance that we must look for our protection.

The King was seriously perturbed at the diplomatic rebuff, and now desired to know what the government's policy would be. Mr. Balfour pointed out (June 22) that the cabinet could only follow the French lead, which he hoped would conduce to an amicable arrangement, "unless, indeed, the German Emperor means serious mischief." By the Anglo-French agreement, he explained next day, Morocco was left to French influence, "and that while we ought to support the French in their legitimate policy in that country, the initiative must clearly belong to them and not to us"

Germany, however, was not wholly content with the sacrifice of the French Foreign Minister, and some days later Prince Radolin warned M. Rouvier, who took up the vacant portfolio, that Germany would not be content unless M. Delcassé's foreign policy were abandoned. King Edward put the situation in a nutshell when he declared, on 28th June: "In plain English, Germany ousts France from Morocco and puts herself in her place." France had given way all along the line, her Foreign Minister had been dismissed at the bidding of Germany, and she had accepted the German demand for a conference which should consider the future of Morocco. The incident was an alarming proof of Germany's aggressive power and of France's defensive weakness.

IV

Other means were now sought for attesting the strength of the Anglo-French entente, and plans were set on foot for an elaborate exchange of hospitality between the fleets of the two countries on the lines of the Russian fleet's visit to Toulon in

1893 which set the seal on Franco-Russian alliance, and in the July of 1905 the British Atlantic fleet, of which the *King Edward VII.* was the flagship, paid a ceremonial visit to Brest. The call was a tremendous success, and a gigantic reception was accorded to the visiting sailors. The whole of France showed the greatest enthusiasm, and all classes in Brest vied with one another to do honour to the British fleet. The feeling, openly expressed on all sides, was one of intense gratitude to the King and the British nation for the way in which they had stood by France in the recent Morocco incident. It was a public ratification of the Entente Cordiale.

The visit was returned in August, when the French Northern Squadron spent a week at Portsmouth. Very elaborate was the British naval demonstration, in which King Edward took a leading part. On the arrival of the French Squadron on 7th August King Edward and Queen Alexandra received the French Admiral and his officers on board the royal yacht, and the King returned their visit by calling on the French Admiral, Vice-Admiral Caillard, on board his flagship. That evening the King entertained the principal French officers to dinner and cordially toasted to the health of President Loubet and to the prosperity of the French people. The next day the King, with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught, attended Vice-Admiral Caillard's reception on board the *Jauréguiberry*, and on the 9th the King reviewed the French fleet and lunched on board the French flagship, conferring honours on the Admiral and his principal officers. The following days were spent by the naval visitors on inland festivities. There was a lunch in their honour at the Guildhall, a visit to Windsor Castle on King Edward's invitation, and a lunch in Westminster Hall given by members of both Houses of Parliament. On 14th August the French Squadron left Portsmouth amid enthusiastic demonstrations of English goodwill. In enthusiastic telegrams exchanged by President Loubet and King Edward the friendship between the two countries was declared to have received a renewal of strength.

Writing to Lord Lansdowne from the yacht *Victoria and Albert* at Cowes on 7th August the King said :

The French Squadron arrived here yesterday in fine weather. Admiral Caillard is a charming man. The reciprocal visits passed off quite well, and the dinner we gave on board was, I think, a

great success and the speeches complimentary and harmless. M. Cambon, who you will probably see to-morrow, dined on board last night, and I had a long interesting conversation with him.

Germany watched with suspicion the proof of such cordial relations between France and England, and the feeling grew that, although she had forced the resignation of M Delcassé and humiliated France, her efforts to weaken the Entente Cordiale had failed signally.

V

On 17th August 1905 the King arrived at Marienbad for his usual cure, and his failure to meet the Kaiser on either the outward or the homeward journey occasioned much hostile comment in Germany. The Belgian Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, writing on 22nd August, described as "scarcely civil" the behaviour of King Edward in staying within a few miles of the German frontier without manifesting the least desire to meet his nephew, and Baron Greindl,[1] the Belgian Minister in Berlin, writing on

[1] Baron Greindl, who studied with great minuteness international affairs and made elaborate reports to his government in Brussels, almost completely identified himself with the German point of view, and his dispatches, which were discovered by the Germans in the Belgian Foreign Office during their occupation of Belgium from 1914 to 1918, were published by the German government with the propagandist object of showing that England was pursuing from 1902 onwards a deliberate policy of hostility to Germany Other diplomatic agents of the Belgian government throughout Europe, whose correspondence during King Edward's reign was also published as war propaganda, take a somewhat less one-sided view of the international situation, but they all are prejudiced by the unfriendly sentiment which prevailed through a great part of the King's reign between the English and Belgian courts and governments. King Edward's views and activities in the sphere of foreign policy are fully discussed by the Belgian diplomatists, but in the opening years of his reign they tend to deprecate the notion that his country's foreign policy was much influenced by his personal control or influence. On 18th February 1905 Baron Greindl, writing from Berlin, draws a lurid picture of the hatred of Germany which is gathering force among the British people He echoes the common German note to the effect that a base commercial jealousy is the cause of England's malignity, and proceeds to explain that the King's constitutional position does not allow him to moderate the English rancour against Germany. "King Edward VII is said to be a whole-hearted lover of peace, but a King of England has only a very limited influence in shaping the course of his country's politics" Some fourteen months later King Edward's display of intimacy with Delcassé led Baron Greindl to change his opinion. Writing from Berlin on 5th April 1906 he says: "One is driven to the conclusion that English foreign policy is directed by the King in person. . . There is undoubtedly in England a Court policy pursued outside and alongside that of the responsible Government." Cf. *Diplomacy Revealed*, p. 54.

23rd September, added the comment: "It is no secret that the personal relations of the Emperor and the King of England are, frankly, bad."

Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador in Berlin, had earlier strongly held the view that a meeting between the King and the Kaiser would diminish the tension between England and Germany. The King received the suggestion quite sympathetically but deemed it "difficult to carry it out at present," and Lascelles agreed that the time was not opportune. "I am very glad," the King wrote from Marienbad (August 20, 1905), "that you agree that the moment has not yet arrived for me to meet the German Emperor."

In official circles in Berlin, however, there was a desire that a meeting should be arranged, and Count von Senckendorff, one of the Kaiser's courtiers, wrote to the King on 15th August begging him to meet the Kaiser "in the interests of peace," and stressing the urgent need of better relations. The Kaiser would be at the Schloss, Homburg, between 7th and 10th September for the manœuvres, and the King might easily pay him a visit on his journey back to England, Sunday 10th September being the most suitable day. It is probable that Senckendorff was writing with Sir Frank Lascelles' knowledge and approval, but the King deemed the intervention an impertinence. He resented, as he wrote to Lascelles on 20th August, Senckendorff's "urging strongly my appearing at Homburg either on 8th, 9th or 10th September to visit the German Emperor, in fact, almost pointing out that it was *my duty* to do so. This I look upon as a great piece of impertinence on his part, though the objects he had in view were doubtless good ones." The King sent Senckendorff's letter home to Lord Knollys, with comprehensive notes in his own hand and directions to work them up into a reply to be dispatched by Knollys to Senckendorff direct, as it was "so confidential a matter."

"The King," Lord Knollys wrote, "as far as he is concerned, has no quarrel whatever with the German Emperor of any sort. The King is on the same terms with him now as he has always been since his accession. Friendly letters and telegrams have passed between them during the year, and the King sent his nephew, Prince Arthur of Connaught, to represent him at two important functions at Berlin within the last few months. This

appeared to please the Emperor, and the King moreover at once accepted for Prince Arthur the Emperor's invitation to attend the manœuvres next month, and he specially selected General Grierson to accompany Prince Arthur as he knew that the Emperor liked him."

The King was quite ready, he said, to resume direct personal intercourse with his nephew as soon as German relations with France improved Meanwhile he was showing Germany all the courtesies which his view of the situation allowed. He was inviting the Crown Prince and Princess to Windsor, and after the visit of the French fleet to Cowes, which had demonstrated the strength of the Anglo-French friendship, he had entertained on board his yacht Count Metternich, the German Ambassador, Admiral Eisendecker, and his personal friend, Baron von Eckardstein. He added that the King did not "wish to appear as running after the German Emperor." It would be undignified and would not meet with the approval of the British government or nation.

"As it happens, however, even if he were disposed to act on your suggestion, which he is not, it would not be possible. He has gone to Marienbad for the sake of health and above all to obtain complete rest, and his 'cure' will not be over until 7th September. On the 9th, at the latest, he must be back in London in order to see several people previous to his going to Rufford Abbey, where he promised to arrive, months ago, on the 11th.

"His Majesty in conclusion directs me," Lord Knollys wrote, "to tell you that he does not know whether the Emperor retains any affection for him, but from one or two things which he has heard recently, he should *say not*, so that it would do no good if he were to pay him a dozen visits in the year. . . ."

The King's reluctance to meet the Kaiser in the autumn was, in part at least, due to his strong wish to avoid any step which might indicate any want of sympathy with France, German pressure on whom in regard to Morocco he warmly resented. For that pressure he was inclined to blame the Kaiser.

Relations between the two monarchs were now at their worst. Even the King's invitation to the Crown Prince and his bride to visit him in England on 13th November irritated the Kaiser, who promptly vetoed the acceptance of the invitation

on the ground that the King of Spain was expected in Berlin at the same period, and that the Crown Prince's presence would be required at an important function. Writing to the Tsar on 22nd August 1905, the Kaiser declared :

He (King Edward) first let his press launch the idea of a visit to me, and when all the papers of Europe had taken it up and talked it over, suddenly published an insulting *démenti* declaring *my Foreign Office* had started the idea. The finest lie I ever came across! After this he goes and invites my son behind my back to come and visit him in England! I have of course stopped that business.[1]

Three months earlier the King had stopped the proposed visit of the Prince of Wales to Germany on account of the visit of the King of Spain to England; now the German Emperor refused to allow the Crown Prince to visit England because of the visit of the King of Spain to Germany! The King of Spain was undoubtedly a very important person.

The breach between the King and the Kaiser was now complete, but strenuous efforts were made to bring about a rapprochement, notably by the Kaiser's sister, Princess Frederick Charles of Hesse, and her husband, who invited Sir Frank Lascelles to lunch with the Kaiser at Cronberg on 25th August. The Kaiser showed himself in a conciliatory mood, indulging, as Lascelles wrote to the King next day, "in his usual jocose observations in the most friendly manner." But the Kaiser's demeanour hardly corresponded with his genuine feelings. In his friendly talk with Lascelles he avoided the crucial themes which were rankling in his mind. Of these he had given a clear account in a letter to the Tsar written three days earlier. Speaking of the visit of the French Northern Squadron to Cowes he had then written :

The British have prostituted themselves before France and the French sailors in the hopes of gaining them over from you, and stopping any rapprochement between you, me and them. The French feel much flattered, but I hope that sensible people have kept their heads cool and clear and seen that all is "cousu de fil blanc," and that Britain only wants to make France her "catspaw" against us, as she used Japan against you.[2]

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, p. 200. [2] *Ibid.* p. 197.

A fortnight earlier it had been arranged by the Admiralty that the Channel Squadron on its "routine-periodic cruise" should visit the Baltic in August, calling at Copenhagen and two German ports The programme was not easily settled. The King was anxious that a visit should also be paid to Stockholm, although Sir J. Rennell Rodd, in view of the internal controversy, deemed the moment inopportune, The King wrote to Lord Lansdowne on 7th August 1905 .

Very glad Channel Fleet (Ad Sir Arthur Wilson) to visit certain German Ports in Baltic, and also Copenhagen Should also visit Stockholm, or other prominent Swedish port, because King lately received rank and uniform of British Admiral; his grandson and heir presumptive married my niece, and last but not least the German fleet has been in Swedish waters this summer. Almost an affront to King if our Fleet did not visit his country, but of course under present circumstances any visit to Norwegian Ports would be out of the question. I hope therefore that the strong wishes I have expressed on this subject will be carried out. . . .

The German ports which were selected for visits were Danzig and Swinemünde, but the announcement was received by the German press without enthusiasm, and the Kaiser, in letters to the Tsar, expressed himself disparagingly.

"His (King Edward's) fleet," he wrote to the Tsar on 22nd August, "is in the act of visiting our shores, and I think this will open the eyes of many Germans who are still loath to vote money for an extension of our fleet; we shall send many down by rail and steamer to take an object lesson."[1]

Two days later he again wrote to the Tsar:

I have ordered my fleet to shadow the British, and when they have anchored to lay themselves near the British fleet, to give them a dinner and make them as drunk as possible to find out what they are about, and then sail off again! I think the astonishment will be great as the English as well as our people believe that our fleet will be in the North Sea So don't tell anybody, for the secret must be well kept[2]

The English fleet, after an enthusiastic reception at Copenhagen, arrived at Swinemünde on 27th August. The first and

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, pp. 200-1. [2] *Ibid.* p. 204.

second squadrons of the German navy interrupted their manœuvres to greet the British ships, an action which the German press sneeringly characterised as "a superfluous display of friendship towards the British visitors." After an interchange of visits and salutes, the British fleet proceeded to Danzig and left on 5th September. Two days later King Edward left Marienbad for England without even attempting to meet his nephew. The Kaiser was incensed, and on 8th September he poured forth the full flood of his resentment into the ears of the unfortunate Sir Frank Lascelles. He had now, he averred, three serious complaints against his uncle. The first referred to the Crown Prince. Not only had the King committed the heinous crime of inviting the Crown Prince to England, but he had had the audacity, when the Kaiser intervened, to point out that the Crown Prince had twice refused an invitation to England owing to the intervention of his father. This "insult" could not be forgiven. In any case there were just reasons for the refusals—on the first occasion the Crown Prince could not come because he had just become engaged; and on the second occasion His Majesty of Spain was visiting Germany. Further, it was usual to address such invitations to the head of the House of Hohenzollern, and it seemed as if King Edward "wanted to get hold of the Crown Prince" for some abstruse purpose of his own The Kaiser professed that he had no objection to the Crown Prince's going to England and getting to know the people, though after the Crown Prince's visit which followed his university career he hesitated about allowing him to pay further visits because of "unseemly romping in unlighted corridors"!

The Kaiser's second complaint was that the King had returned to England from Marienbad without trying to arrange a meeting. The press had approved the suggestion, but Lord Knollys had caused a curt statement to be published that the idea had never been entertained. The curtness of the *démenti* was generally taken in Germany as a further "insult" to himself.

The querulous Kaiser's third complaint was that the King had taken no notice of the British fleet's reception at German ports a fortnight earlier, whereas at Kiel the year before "everything had gone off well."

Lascelles, who now found his position so unenviable that he hinted at resignation, pointed out that there was another side

to each of these questions, and finally, at Lascelles' prompting, the German Emperor expressed regret at the strained relations, but characteristically added, "But I cannot admit that it is my fault." He desired Lascelles to report the whole interview to the King, which Lascelles did—after taking five days to cogitate over the matter.

The King received Sir Frank Lascelles' letter on 17th September whilst at Rufford Abbey, and promptly wrote to Lord Knollys indicating the tenor of the reply to be sent

"Tell him," he wrote, "that I have no quarrel whatever nor desire one. I was fully entitled to write to the Crown Prince as I did. . . . The real truth is that he was jealous at my asking his son at all. Of course I know that the young man could not come over without his father's permission.

"The German Emperor knows perfectly well that I was due on the 8th inst. at Flushing to meet the Queen on her way to Denmark, and as I had only finished my cure at Marienbad on the 7th it would have been impossible for me to have met him at Homburg or Frankfurt, even if it had been desirable I purposely did not stop or pass by Frankfurt on my journey home.

"The whole tone of the German Emperor's language to Lascelles is one of peevish complaint against me I consider it wholly uncalled for. He possibly does not touch on politics as that is the subject which might lead to a serious quarrel and is therefore best avoided. The social matters alluded to by German Emperor are almost too trivial to be taken notice of. I can only hope that next year some 'rendezvous' may be arranged between us, but during the remainder of this year I do not think it will be possible."

Five days later Lord Knollys wrote to Sir Frank Lascelles from notes supplied by the King:

The Emperor must really be anxious for a quarrel when he complains of the denial which appeared in the English newspapers as to a meeting between the King and him, and says that it was looked upon as an "insult to him." The absurdity of this statement and his ridiculous touchiness make it unnecessary for me to enter into this complaint of his—one among many others equally trivial I will only remark that the King (and I think he was perfectly right) considered that in the interests of the two countries it was desirable to put an end to the reports that were prevalent, that he intended to meet the Emperor on going to or coming from Marienbad, and that notwithstanding what the

Emperor, with his superior knowledge on everything, said to you, both Balfour and Lansdowne thought that if the King were to meet the Emperor it would be very unpopular in this country. I mean, of course, at that particular time.

Have you any idea why, if the Emperor wants the King to pay him a visit, he uses the language he does about him (even taking General Grierson into his confidence, which was grossly improper of him) and why also constantly intrigues against England ?

If he ceased doing these two things, I have no doubt the King would be glad to meet him when a good opportunity presented itself. But you must remember that the King proposed going to Berlin a year and a half ago, but was then told that the Emperor, who appears to suppose that nobody has any engagements but himself, was recovering from an illness and had to go to the Mediterranean, though it would only have been a question of a short postponement of his journey.

I forwarded to the King your last cypher telegram in which you say that the Emperor has now abandoned his intention of writing to him, and the latter telegraphed to me in reply that he always expected it would be a game of "bluff" as usual. I fear the Emperor is rather a bully.

I am very glad he was so amiable to you the other day, especially when you alluded to your resignation, as it will make your position easier and pleasanter, but what an impossible man he must be to deal with !

Sir Frank Lascelles duly informed the Kaiser of the tenor of Lord Knollys' reply, and there the matter ended—without, however, any alleviation of the discord between the two courts.

Such was the tension between King Edward and the Kaiser during the years 1905 and 1906 that it finally became the subject of the cartoonist's pen. In the Berlin *Lustige Blatter* of 1st August 1906 there was a very curious caricature, which well illustrated the existing antipathy. The cartoon formed the centre of several other "skits," the general title for all being "Hof und Gesellschaft" (Court and Society). King Edward, a big cigar in his mouth, a pencil in one hand, was bending over a table, on which was spread out a map. He was about to start on his autumn tour, and was selecting the route. This was evidently a puzzling business, for he is depicted as saying, "How can I get to Marienbad without meeting my dear nephew ? Flushing, Antwerp, Calais, Rouen, Madrid, Lisbon,

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Nice, Monaco—all extremely unsafe! Ha! I simply go *via* Berlin; then I am sure not to meet him! All right!"

VI

Not a little of the Kaiser's truculence was due to the fact that in the summer of 1905 he believed that an astonishing and secret diplomatic success had completed his ascendancy in Europe—an ascendancy that had commenced with the fall of Delcassé and the defeat of Russia by Japan. Many German military experts held that Germany ought then to have forced war against France and England. They believed that at this moment of the paralysis of the Franco-Russian alliance the triumph of the Kaiser's armies would have been swift and sweeping enough to establish once for all a German military hegemony over Europe. Russia was helpless. The military and naval disasters in the Far East, the revolutionary menace at home, the frequent misunderstandings with England on questions of contraband of war had almost shattered the Tsar's nerve. On every side danger encompassed him. With characteristic cunning the Kaiser, in the rôle of the benevolent adviser of a colleague in difficulties, pointed out in secret letters and telegrams, which began while the Tsar was perplexed by the Dogger Bank incident, that an alliance between Russia and Germany was the Tsar's only road to salvation. Thus alone could England's claws be pared, and her malign friendship with Russia's enemy, Japan, be counteracted. The Tsar saw from the first that an alliance with Germany was scarcely reconcilable with his obligations to France, but the Kaiser thought to remove this objection by the assertion that if he and the Tsar stood shoulder to shoulder, France would have no option but to join them. Most impressively, in a long six-page letter dated 2nd November 1904, did the Kaiser press his plan on the Tsar. Other letters and telegrams followed; finally on 20th November the Tsar received a letter from the Kaiser enclosing a draft treaty between Russia and Germany, written entirely in his own hand. The Kaiser pointed out that England was exceptionally vulnerable in Asia, and that Russian advances in Afghanistan and Turkestan might easily undermine her hold on India. "The loss of India," he added, "would be a mortal blow to Great Britain." Count Lamsdorff,

however, pointed out to the Tsar that it was needful to consult France, but the Kaiser insisted that it was essential for the success of the project that no word should reach France until a defensive treaty had been arranged. But the Tsar's ministers would not yield, and the Kaiser had to acknowledge that he had failed to win the first round.

During the opening months of 1905 Russia's misfortunes in Manchuria and the insurrection of workmen and peasants at home were the main subjects of the Kaiser's letters to the Tsar. But his hopes of a Russo-German alliance were still alive, though he had come to realise that the Tsar's ministers would not yield their condition of a preliminary consultation with France. In July the Kaiser thought that by playing a trick on the Tsar he might reach his goal without the help of the Tsar's ministers. He was yachting in the Baltic and was proposing to cruise in the Gulf of Finland. On 19th July 1905 he telegraphed to the Tsar: "Should it give you any pleasure to see me, I am, of course, always at your disposal." The Tsar amiably suggested a meeting at Björkö, near Viborg. The Kaiser eagerly accepted, and announced that he was travelling "as a simple tourist, without any ceremony." The Tsar, duped by the Kaiser's assurance, arrived in his yacht, *The Standart*, without any political advisers, and on 23rd July he met the Kaiser aboard *The Hohenzollern*, only to find that the Kaiser was accompanied by Herr von Tschirschky, the Secretary of the German Foreign Office. The conversation opened with family gossip and a friendly exchange of assurances that in the event of a British attack on the Baltic they would jointly occupy Denmark for the duration of the war.[1]

It was evident, the Kaiser wrote to Bülow on 25th July 1905,

> that the Tsar had a personal grievance against England. He termed Edward VII. the greatest "mischief-maker" and the most deceitful and dangerous intriguer in the world. I could only agree with him in these remarks, and testify to their truth,

[1] Both Russia and Germany regarded Denmark as a valuable ally in case of war between them. The Tsar, whose mother was a Danish princess, was on the friendliest terms with the Danish royal family, and Copenhagen was a meeting-place for King Edward and all the kindred of the royal Danish house. The Kaiser deemed it politic to counteract other influences at Copenhagen by forcing himself on the royal hospitality of Copenhagen. The Kaiser visited the King of Denmark on 31st July 1905, and he came again with the Empress on 3rd July 1907 to visit the new king, Frederick VIII., who succeeded on 29th January 1906.

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adding that I had suffered greatly in consequence during the past few years. I told him that King Edward had a perfect passion for making treaties, whereupon the Tsar emphatically pronounced: "Well, I can only say, he shall not get one from me, and never in my life against Germany or you, my word of honour on it." . . [1]

Thereupon the Kaiser produced the draft of a treaty very similar to the one of which he had sent the Tsar a copy the previous November He invited the Tsar to put his signature to the document. The feeble Tsar hesitated, loath to betray France, yet swayed by the dire need of a period of assured safety. Personal feelings mingled, for the Kaiser had seemed to be his only sympathetic friend since the commencement of the war. Finally, with incredible weakness, he signed, without consulting France, the clandestine treaty of alliance. Herr von Tschirschky added his name, and the Tsar invited a naval officer, who was on board his yacht with him, Admiral Birileff, who knew nothing of politics, and did not trouble to read the paper, to follow suit. Thereupon the two monarchs took leave of one another, agreeing not to reveal their negotiations to any one until peace with Japan was signed. The four clauses of the treaty provided that: (1) If any European State should attack either Power the other would aid with all its forces. (2) Neither would conclude a separate peace. (3) The treaty should come into force on the conclusion of peace with Japan, and might only be cancelled at a year's notice. (4) Russia would make its terms known to France and invite her to sign it as an ally.[2]

It was only seven weeks after Delcassé's fall. Well might William II. believe that the stars in their courses were on his side. His exultation was unrestrained, his imagination unbounded. Shortly after his capture of the Tsar's signature he wrote to that monarch of the treaty (July 27th):

In times to come it may not be impossible that even Japan may feel inclined to join it. This would cool down English self-assertion and impertinence as she is her ally too. The 24th July 1905 is a corner-stone in European politics and turns over a new leaf in the history of the world. . . . Holland, Belgium,

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xix. ii. p. 460, No. 6220.

[2] The terms of the treaty were first published in a volume of Secret Documents by the Russian republican government in the autumn of 1917, and reprinted in *New York Herald*, Paris edition, 3rd September 1917.

Denmark, Sweden will all be attracted to this new great centre of gravity. . . . They will revolve in the orbit of the great block of Powers (Russia, Germany, France, Austria, Italy) and feel confidence in leaning on and revolving around this mass.[1]

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Presently he goes still further :

America will stand on the side of this combination. . . . The Continental Combine flanked by America is the sole and only manner to effectively block the way to the whole world becoming John Bull's private property, which he exploits to his heart's content, after having, by his intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilised nations by each other's ears for his own personal benefit.[2]

The Kaiser believed he had scored a success against England. In his correspondence with the Tsar he claimed completely to have outwitted King Edward. Some inkling of their secret negotiation, he told the Tsar (August 22), had reached the King at Cowes early that month, and his uncle was represented as greatly puzzled. The Kaiser put King Edward's curiosity, when he wrote to the Tsar on 22nd August 1905, in an offensive light.

The "Arch intriguer—and mischief-maker" in Europe as you rightly called the King of England has been hard at work in the last months. At Cowes he said to one of my friends—a German gentleman I sent to observe the "Entente Cordiale"—"I can't find out what has been going on at Björkö! Benckendorff knows nothing—*for he always tells me everything*; Copenhagen knows nothing, and even the Emperor's mother (Queen Alexandra's sister)—*who always lets me know everything*—has heard nothing from her son this time; even Lamsdorff—*who is such a nice man and lets me know all I want to hear*—knows nothing or at least won't tell! It is very disagreeable!" This shows you how very wide is the net of secret information he has cast over Europe and over you.[3]

On 24th August 1905 the Kaiser again wrote exultantly of the way he had duped his uncle :

I am on a visit to my sisters here, who just returned from a long stay in England. They tell me the news of our meeting at Björkö threw all the people there and the press into the state of wildest excitement. The King and the Court before all were quite "aus dem Häuschen" [in the dark], he trying to find out

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, p. 191. [2] *Ibid.* p. 211.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 197-200.

from my sisters wether they know anything of what has [been] going on! They laughed him in the face, of course, and were much amused![1]

The Kaiser, while professing to Sir Frank Lascelles to be anxious for the best possible relations with his uncle, was thus exulting over a secret treaty which would, he imagined, turn out to England's misfortune by leaving her completely isolated in a world of enemies. In face of such duplicity and low cunning there was every conceivable reason for King Edward's distrust of his erratic nephew.

Two months later the Kaiser thought he had another occasion for a series of ungenerous and untrue comments on his uncle. Only a few weeks earlier the threatening attitude of Germany had impressed the Danish government with the risks of a European war, and they appealed to England to obtain positive assurances of respect for their neutrality. Count Frijs was charged on behalf of the Danish government to draw the attention of King Edward to the dangers of a European war. The King replied "In my opinion you take too gloomy a view of the future. The only causes of conflict which have arisen have been happily settled, a fact which shows a distinct will-to-peace tendency in Europe; but I will admit this, that with a man of so impulsive a temperament as the German Emperor at the head of the greatest military Power in Europe, anything may happen."

The Kaiser saw in the King's reception of Count Frijs a deep Machiavellian plot and promptly telegraphed to the Tsar in October:

It seems that the . . . arch mischief-maker of Europe in London is at work again. . . . Like brigands in a wood he has sent Benckendorff—your Ambassador—to Copenhagen on a clandestine mission to your mother, with the instructions to win her over to influence you for a policy against me. The Foreign Office in London knows about his journey, which is denied at your Embassy there. I may, of course, be misinformed, but the extraordinary behaviour of England leads me to think that it cannot do harm to inform you at all events. It is peculiar that your Ambassador should lend himself to such tricks, as they are bound to be found out, thereby creating fresh excitement, of which I think we had quite enough lately.[2]

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, pp. 201-2. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 198-9.

The Tsar, however, was not to be deluded this time, and the snub by " Nicky " to " Willy " will be appreciated :

"Best thanks for your telegram," replied "Nicky." "Benckendorff [went] by my permission, as my mother invited him to come as a friend of the Danish family. What sort of conversation went on I certainly do not know. But I can resolutely assure you that nothing can influence me except the interest, safeguard, and honour of my country. Benckendorff is a loyal subject and a real gentleman. I know he would never lend himself to any false tricks, even if they came from the 'great mischief-maker' himself. . . ."[1]

The secret of the treaty of Björko was well kept for the time, but as soon as the Tsar, on 30th August, revealed the terms of the treaty to Count Lamsdorff its fate was sealed.[2] Lamsdorff warningly denounced it to his master as a breach of the alliance with France. Count Witte, on returning home from America after carrying through the peace with Japan, took Lamsdorff's view that all that remained for the Tsar to do was to repudiate the whole transaction, and the Grand Duke Nicholas expressed himself to the Tsar in identical terms. The Tsar made no resistance. His ministers quickly brought him back to his senses and his duty. He learnt his lesson, and, recognising the tempter, escaped from the snare into which he had been led, with the result that the secret treaty, through lack of ratification, remained of no effect and in due time was formally annulled.

But the Kaiser made another effort to secure a European combination. On 29th September he telegraphed to the Tsar, persuading him that France must with a little pressure join in their treaty. "What is signed is signed. God is our testator," he added; "a purely defensive agreement cannot possibly clash with the French treaty concluded by your father." But he knew the game was up, and the subsequent publication of Count Lamsdorff's instructions to the Russian delegate at the Conference at Algeciras finally proved to him that the Russian government had no intention of acting in foreign affairs with any Power save France. The Kaiser's treacherous plot thus came to its humiliating end.

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, pp. 198-9.
[2] On the previous day the peace of Portsmouth had been signed by Russia and Japan. Cf. *Willy-Nicky Letters*, p. 208 *seq.*

What William II. took to be Hesperidean apples of secret diplomacy turned out to be Dead-Sea fruit in the broad light of day. As Bjorkö had failed, Tangier also was to fail King Edward spoke of the Kaiser in regard to this incident as "the most brilliant failure in history," and at the same time he remarked to a friend, "People can talk if they like of perfidious Albion, but can there really be anything more perfidious and more stupid than the present policy of the Kaiser?" [1]

VII

Meanwhile negotiations continued between the French and German governments as to the programme which was to be submitted to the Moroccan Conference. There was some nervousness, both in London and Paris, as to Germany's ultimate intention. In France the possibility that the coming Conference would end in war with Germany was freely entertained at the end of the year 1905. The Kaiser for his part was constantly alleging to all and sundry that "England wished for war, not the King, not the Ministry, but some very influential people like Sir John Fisher," who deemed it "the moment to provoke war because the British Fleet was in perfect order and more powerful than the German Fleet." War would follow if England continued "to incite and upset France's good judgement" In an interview with Mr. Alfred Beit, reported by Lord Esher to the King on 17th January 1906, the Kaiser persisted in repeating that both the King and Lord Lansdowne had threatened an invasion of Schleswig-Holstein, and was bitter in complaint of the insults which the British press was always levelling at him. British journalists charged him with discouraging the Tsar from coming to terms with Japan, whereas, he said, they well knew that President Roosevelt had thanked him for his successful efforts to bring the Tsar to accept reasonable terms.

The Moroccan Conference was about to meet at Algeciras when Sir Edward Grey took over the British Foreign Secretaryship from Lord Lansdowne (December 1905). Some fears were expressed in France as to the attitude of the new Liberal government to the entente, but assurances were soon given that the

[1] Baron von Eckardstein's *Ten Years at the Court of St. James's*, p. 251.

policy which Lord Lansdowne had inaugurated with the King's marked approval would undergo no change.

Finally, the Conference of Algeciras commenced its deliberations on 16th January 1906. From the beginning the British and French representatives acted closely together. Before the Conference opened the King remarked to M. Cambon: "Tell us what you wish on each point, and we will support you without restriction or reserves." Count Tattenbach, the German envoy, maintained (February 4, 1906) that "the British were more French than the French," and plainly hinted that if the Conference failed the responsibility would largely rest on the shoulders of the English envoy, Sir Arthur Nicolson, who was more than a match for the German Count. The King, commenting on Sir Arthur's attitude, wrote on his dispatch of 4th February: "The language held by Sir A. Nicolson to Count Tattenbach is admirable, but the latter will no doubt induce his Government to believe that the cause of failure of the Conference is due to the British obstinacy."

The prospect of war was being envisaged on all sides, though no hostile preparations were being made. It seemed as if Germany's object was to render the Conference barren of result, and to undermine British and Spanish relations with France. But Britain and France followed up closely the promise of 1904, and acted together. The King was kept in very close touch with events by the admirable reports of his "*missus dominicus*," Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace.

The French and German delegates were now watching each other closely like the proverbial *chiens de Faience*, both professing most conciliatory sentiments, and each trying to discover how far the other would yield. Germany, while admitting that the French were entitled to a predominant position in the region adjoining the Algerian frontier, was firmly resolved not to admit a mandate to France to establish order in the country generally. Nor would she be satisfied by any amount of promises about the open door. Her contention was that France must not be allowed to establish predominance at Fez, because that would lead inevitably to the *Tunisification* of Morocco.[1]

On 25th February 1906, Wallace, writing to Knollys from Algeciras, feared a premature ending of the Conference. Russia

[1] Wallace to Knollys, 21st January 1906.

was now pressing Germany for concessions in the interests of general peace, and Germany refused to budge. The King made this comment :

> This letter (like all his) is most interesting Germany forced the Conference on France and has never *once* attempted to conciliate or meet her in the views which she was bound to put forward. The gist of the letter is in the last two pages—Germany's interest in France's humiliation and loss.

Early in March a rupture threatened over the question of the police. France claimed that she and Spain should organise and control the police at the ports. To this claim Germany offered a stout resistance, but Russia and Italy supported a Franco-Spanish mandate, and President Roosevelt personally urged the Kaiser to give way. Finally, a settlement was reached which provided that a Swiss Inspector-General should be placed in command of a police force to be furnished by France and Spain. The controversy over the state bank was similarly compromised, but France was far from satisfied, and the British government persuaded M Cambon with some difficulty to accept the proffered terms which included great concessions from Germany.

The Act of Algeciras (signed on 7th April 1906) which embodied the results of the deliberations was professedly regarded with satisfaction by both France and Germany. In point of fact the French predominance in Morocco was unprejudiced, and there was some ground for Count Reventlow's complaint that it was a German defeat and that the Kaiser and his Chancellor had threatened war without intending it. At any rate a breach of the peace was postponed, while the Kaiser's hopes, cherished for so many years, of a European coalition under German hegemony were finally broken up.

The Algeciras Conference proved an utter disappointment for Germany, and was, in fact, a heavy diplomatic defeat. It is not too much to say that to Edward VII. is partly due the comparatively happy termination of the Conference. Nearly all the participating Powers, including Germany's nominal ally, Italy, helped to confirm French supremacy in Morocco. But perhaps the most decisive result was a strengthening of the entente between England and France, who now exchanged military and naval views with a view to concerting arrangements in case of

need, and strengthened themselves against a renewal of surprises like the Tangier threat. Europe had now definitely entered the danger-zone.

The Moroccan crisis brought to light, to Germany's manifest discomfiture, the unwelcome fact that, should Germany press the advantage that she thought she had recently gained over France and force a sudden conflict on her, England would be found at France's side on the battlefield. There was no military convention between England and France, but England rightly foresaw that if she let Germany know that she did not intend to allow France to fall a victim to German violence Germany might hesitate to attack France. The intimation of England's resolve, in spite of the absence of any detailed plan of military co-operation with the French army, produced its intended effect. And while the Kaiser was loud in complaint of England's plain disclosure of her identification of her interests with those of France, he acknowledged the prudence of an indefinite postponement of a breach of the peace.

Although the perilous fire was for the moment damped down it was by no means extinguished. There was justice in the prophecy that it would soon blaze forth again in fresh strength. The Moroccan danger had remained formidable for a full year, and in spite of the temporary settlement of the Algeciras Conference, it merited Mr. Winston Churchill's description as "the first milestone to Armageddon." The whole fault, the Kaiser told Haldane when the two men met in Berlin in September 1906, was Delcassé's, who had wanted to pick a quarrel and bring Britain into it (Haldane to King, September 2, 1906). But unbiassed observers may hold the opinion that the peace would never have been endangered had the Kaiser refrained from appearing at Tangier in 1905 as the theatrical champion of Moroccan independence.

CHAPTER XVI

THE KING AND INDIA

I

1901 — Ætat. 59

The King's interest in foreign affairs never prevented him from giving the fullest consideration to matters connected with the Indian Empire. His tour of that vast country in 1875–76 had given him a keen insight into its administration and into the personality of the native princes, and he retained that interest until his death. Throughout his reign he was in constant correspondence with Lord Curzon and Lord Minto, the successive Viceroys, and although he wrote rather less than his mother had done, he followed Indian affairs with a not inferior interest.[1] The King's confidential correspondence with the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, covered the whole range of Indian administration, and for the most part the Viceroy's views commended themselves to the King. Occasionally, however, the King suggested in gentle language some qualification, which the Viceroy amiably accepted.

The Viceroy could always rely upon a sympathetic interest on the part of the King in any matters which directly affected the Crown, especially in relation to the Indian princes, who had warmly welcomed the King's accession to the throne, and many of whom cherished pleasant reminiscences of personal intercourse with him either in India or on their visits to England. Lord

[1] In addition he kept up a continuous correspondence with Sir Douglas Haig during his tenure of the office of Inspector-General of Cavalry in India from October 1903 to August 1906. At the King's request Sir Douglas wrote frequently of the state of the cavalry in India, and the King noted with satisfaction the steadily increasing efficiency of that branch of the service under Sir Douglas's direction.

Curzon, who was Viceroy at the King's accession, kept the King well informed of the characters and conduct of Indian princes. He viewed with disfavour their growing practice of absenting themselves from their states on long visits to Europe, but the King, as he wrote to Lord Curzon on the 11th July 1901, deemed it

a very difficult matter to lay down any hard and fast rule on the subject. There is no doubt that visits to England by Native Princes are useful, as long as they are not too frequent or prolonged, which by any lengthened absence from the States over which they rule would be undesirable.

The Viceroy is very strong in his expressions regarding certain Native Princes who are personally well known to the King, but he fully enters into the Viceroy's view that the visits to Europe of these Princes are too frequent and prolonged, and in consequence they neglect their duties in the States over which they rule. If the Viceroy were to point this out in a friendly spirit to them, it would perhaps have a better effect upon them than any formal expressions of disapproval.

The Viceroy's reply was diplomatic.

"It must not be imagined," he wrote in reply on 31st July, "that because the Viceroy has ventured to address your Majesty in what has been justly called strong terms about the character and the history of some of the Indian princes that therefore he employs the same language to any one else, least of all to the princes themselves. . . . He cannot recall having spoken one hard word to a chief since he has been in India. On the contrary he has endeavoured to bring himself into personal contact with all the chiefs of every type and degree."

Although with the greater number of Indian princes the Viceroy's relations were distinctly cordial, his relations with the Gaekwar of Baroda were by no means on such a happy footing, and provided one of the numerous matters of disagreement between the Viceroy and the home government. In 1905 the Gaekwar proposed to absent himself from India during the Prince of Wales's tour—an absence that would appear to be a slight on the heir to the British throne. Lord Curzon took what was perhaps an unduly severe view of the Gaekwar's desire to leave India, but the King, while regretting the Gaekwar's absence, strongly held that his liberty should not be hampered by Viceregal action. Lord Curzon took the hint and the Gaekwar was able to gratify his *wanderlust*.

II

1901 — Ætat. 59

Early in the King's reign Lord Curzon was desirous of associating King Edward personally with the government of India, and on 27th March 1901 suggested that the King should come to Delhi and be crowned as Emperor. A Durbar, he suggested, could be arranged on the same scale as that at which Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India by Lord Lytton in 1877. The idea was attractive to the King, but he pointed out that affairs of state must of necessity keep him for the present in England. But although he himself could not be present, he strongly approved of the holding of a Durbar in honour of his Coronation in 1902, at which one of his relatives might preside. It was deemed inconvenient for the Prince of Wales to represent his father, though an early visit of the Prince to India was contemplated. The matter was long under consideration; finally, in the summer of 1902, the King informed Lord Curzon that his brother, the Duke of Connaught, would go to India as his representative. The news, Lord Curzon wrote, was received in India with a chorus of delight, and he thereupon began to devote much time to elaborating the appropriate ceremonial for the event.

Some difference of opinion arose, however, between Lord Curzon and the home government over the terms of the message which was to be delivered at the Durbar in the King's name. Lord Curzon was anxious to supplement the royal message with the announcement in the King's name of a remission of taxation, urging that a royal Durbar was closely associated in the Oriental mind with ideas of royal clemency and favour. When the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton, vetoed any such proceeding, the Viceroy appealed against the minister direct to the King. But the King upheld the government's view that the matter was one in which they must exercise exclusive responsibility, and that it was undesirable that the King should immediately associate himself with the remission of taxation any more than with its imposition. Writing to the Viceroy, who had hinted at resignation, the King expressed this point of view (December 1902):

I have thoroughly discussed with the Prime Minister and other of my Ministers the question of an announcement of remission of taxation on the occasion of the Durbar, and I find

them to be unanimous in their opinion that my name should not in any way be connected with such an announcement. I hope, therefore, that you will withdraw your proposal, as I feel I cannot give it my sanction.

Both I and my Ministers have, I can assure you, the greatest confidence in you, and we are persuaded that you will continue to carry on, in the same admirable manner as before, the very difficult duties entrusted to you I trust, therefore, you will not think that our opposition to you on this particular point implies the slightest withdrawal of that confidence.

Though Lord Curzon regretted the King's decision, and assured him in reply that financial relief would characterise the next Indian budget, he withdrew the threat of his resignation.

The Coronation Durbar took place at Delhi amid much magnificence during the first week of January 1903, in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Viceroy, a hundred ruling chiefs, and well over a hundred and fifty thousand visitors. Like King Edward, Lord Curzon knew how much depended on the ritual of ceremony, and in the Coronation Durbar he reached the zenith of oriental pageantry. Such was the brilliance of that historical event that even Europeans were overwhelmed with admiration. The Viceroy's eloquence rose to rhetorical heights in the speech in which he gave the Indian princes a royal message from their newly crowned Raj. Nor was King Edward's name ever more heartily cheered than when that unique gathering of orientals and occidentals acclaimed him Emperor of India. The celebrations concluded with a spectacular review of British and native troops under Lord Kitchener, who had lately arrived to take up the post of Commander-in-Chief.

The Durbar, as the Viceroy wrote to the King on 29th January, was an unqualified success. It was a solemn, impressive, and perhaps even a defiant manifestation of Imperial power. Every resource of imagination had been exhausted to add to its colour and its splendour. The Viceroy, striking while the iron was hot, asked at the same time as to when it would be convenient for the Prince and Princess of Wales to pay their promised visit to India, and he suggested that in view of the generous reception which the native princes were offering the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, a year's interval might well elapse before the Prince and Princess made their progress. To this suggestion the King replied on 20th February :

I have discussed the matter thoroughly with my Son and the Prime Minister, and carefully considered it on all sides of its bearings. We have come to the conclusion that for them to pay that visit within a year of the Durbar would not be advisable, as it would be too soon.

Thanks to your admirable arrangements, the Coronation Durbar is an event which will remain long in the minds of the native Chiefs and people of India The ceremonials were carried out with such unprecedented éclat that a certain time must elapse to let that impression subside before the arrival in India of the Heir to the Throne accompanied by his wife, and the effect should not be minimised after the exceptionally grand reception which the Duke and Duchess of Connaught have so recently received, not only at the Delhi Durbar but at all the different places they have visited in India. My Son's visit would probably be carried out much on the same lines as my visit in 1875–6, which lasted over 4 months, and they would probably visit even more places than I did, as the means of travelling are so much easier than when I was in India 27 years ago. The native Chiefs have doubtless been put to considerable expense this year, and as my Son and his Wife would naturally have to pay visits to the most important ones, it would cause a great drain on their resources, and you are I know most properly anxious that they should not be too prolific in the spending of money on ceremonials or receptions which must naturally prove detrimental to the inhabitants of the States over which they rule.

After the recent termination of the South African War, this is besides not a good year for asking Parliament for any large sum of money. This has been strongly pointed out to me by the Prime Minister, in which I entirely concur. Under the circumstances I do not think that such a visit should be contemplated at least before the end of 1904. When you have given this matter your full consideration, I feel sure that you will see how strongly the different arguments I have brought forward will weigh with you. You will doubtless remember that from the first I was averse to any approximate date being fixed for such a visit; circumstances might occur which would render an alteration of the time necessary.

The Viceroy agreed to the postponement of the visit until the autumn of 1904, but in the event, as the King predicted, circumstances did occur which rendered an alteration necessary, and the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales did not take place until the end of 1905.

III

1903 — Ætat. 61

From the time of Warren Hastings it had been the hope of the government of India to enter into commercial relations with the secluded frontier state of Tibet. Though nominally under the suzerainty of China, it was an independent state whose main aim had long been complete isolation, but incursions by the Tibetans into Indian territory rendered direct negotiations desirable with the Tibetan government, though the Tibetan government would not reply to communications from India. Commercial conventions between India and China respecting Tibet had been concluded both in 1890 and 1893, but the Tibetans had declined to put either into effect. Meanwhile Russia had shown signs of strong interest in the country, and the British government suspected, on good ground, that Russia was desirous of making Tibet her ally. The King's distrust of Russia was still active, and he regarded with grave misgivings her plan, early in 1903, to send a mission to penetrate Tibet. Writing on 20th February 1903 to the Prime Minister, he expressed his

> fears that Russia cannot be trusted, as she has but one desire, and that is, to increase her power and territories in Asia. The conclusion the Cabinet has arrived at, to inform Russia that if she intends sending an agent to Lhassa, we shall do the same, and with a considerable escort, so that if any complications arise out of it she is responsible, seems a very wise one.

In May 1903 it was decided to send a mission across the Tibetan border to meet at an appointed spot Tibetan and Chinese commissioners. But when the English envoy, Colonel Francis Younghusband, arrived at the place in July, no one met him. A small military expedition under General Macdonald was thereupon arranged to accompany him to Gyangtse, 150 miles from the forbidden city of Lhassa, where Tibetan representatives were summoned to meet him with a view to negotiation. The expedition had orders to use force if attacked on the way. At the beginning of January 1904 the advance began, and soon met with a stubborn resistance on the part of Tibetan troops. Gyangtse was reached on 11th April after much fighting, but the Tibetan government was in no more amenable mood than before, and it was found necessary to push on to the forbidden city itself, which was reached on 3rd August. Here, after much

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procrastination, which caused the King to write (May 9, 1904), "We must be firm with the Tibetans, England's prestige must be maintained," a treaty between Great Britain and Tibet was signed on 7th September 1904, in the Dalai Lama's great hall of audience. The terms included provision for organised trade between India and Tibet, the payment of an indemnity of £500,000 (subsequently reduced to one-third), and an undertaking on the part of the Tibetan government not to part with Tibetan territory to any foreign Power without British consent. Thus the exclusion of Russia from any dominant influence in Tibet was assured.

One clause of the treaty was held by the home government to be in conflict not only with its instructions to Younghusband, but also with its promises to Russia. Lord Lansdowne had given positive assurances to the House of Lords, and in private to the Russian Ambassador, that no annexation was contemplated. Mr. Balfour had said the same in the House of Commons. But by the terms of the treaty the payment of the indemnity was to be spread over seventy-five years, during which time England was to occupy the Chumbi Valley, Tibetan territory—an occupation which amounted to virtual annexation. At the King's bidding Lord Knollys promptly wrote (July 8, 1904) to Lord Ampthill who had undertaken the Viceregal function during Lord Curzon's absence on leave:

> The King is glad to hear that you consider the Tibet force is sufficiently strong to remove any apprehensions as to its safety.
>
> His Majesty hopes that nothing will occur to render a prolonged occupation of the country necessary, and he will certainly greatly regret if his Government were to lay itself open to a charge of breach of faith, especially after the strong assurances which have been given by Lord Lansdowne both in the House of Lords and to the Russian Ambassador.
>
> At the same time he feels it is absolutely essential that the objects of the Mission should be attained, as otherwise we should be even in a worse position than before, and our prestige would materially suffer both in Europe and, what is perhaps still more important on this particular question, in the East as well.

Younghusband had been told that the indemnity must be paid in three years, and his extension of the time to seventy-five was in contravention to his instructions. Nor when he was directed to modify the terms before leaving Lhassa did he obey. In the result, when the King, who had regarded the expedition,

which had caused him a good deal of nervousness, as extremely successful, strongly urged the bestowal of an honour on Younghusband, Mr. Brodrick, the Secretary of State for India, demurred, and replied to Lord Knollys on 5th October 1904:

The King has repeatedly pressed me to submit Younghusband for a decoration. I do not know Younghusband, and all I have heard of him points him out as a man of ability and courage. But he went to Tibet (before I was Secretary of State) fully determined on the policy of our staying there and controlling the policy of Tibet. The Cabinet, which early in 1903 absolutely declined this policy, re-affirmed their decision most firmly in November 1903, when the Mission started for Gyangtse. Lord Lansdowne gave pledges to the Russians and Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons to same effect. Younghusband was left no discretion as to terms except as to the amount of indemnity, which was to be such that it could be *paid in three years*. . . . Younghusband none the less fixed an indemnity of 75 lacs spread over 75 years. He was at once told to alter the agreement, but left Lhassa without attempting to do so, merely proposing to discuss it at Simla. . . . I telegraphed to the Prime Minister, who came here and considers that the honour of the country, as well as public policy, is involved; that we must throw over Younghusband and make it clear that he acted in direct disobedience of orders. I am very sorry but I see no alternative. . . .

The home government, in fact, deemed Younghusband worthy of censure. In December, however, Mr. Brodrick gave way to the King's urgency so far as to agree to the bestowal of a K.C.I.E., and the King did not press his point further.[1]

IV

Lord Curzon's normal five years' term of office expired in December 1903, but to the King's satisfaction he agreed to extend his tenure by two years, on the reasonable condition that he should be granted leave of absence early in 1904. The

[1] Three years later, in January 1908, Mr. Morley explained to the King Tibetan affairs and the convention with China, yielding up Chumbi Valley to China. The King replied on 13th January: "Please tell Mr. Morley that I think we are very magnanimous, and hope that China will not look upon it as weakness on our part, but for the reasons which Mr. Morley has explained perhaps we have acted judiciously, if we only insist on China observing the stipulation convention after as well as before evacuation.—E.R."

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King desired that every honour should be paid to the home-coming Viceroy, and wrote to the Prime Minister on 2nd May that

> on his return I wish to see him first, and before he sees any of the Ministers, or in fact anybody else except his wife. From the tone of his letter it almost looks as if he was not going to return to India.

Immediately on his arrival at Charing Cross on 16th May the Viceroy drove straight to Buckingham Palace with Lady Curzon to be received by the King and Queen Honours were showered upon the great pro-consul. On 2nd July he was installed as Constable of Dover and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports at the King's own wish, and on the 20th received the Freedom of the City of London at the Guildhall and was entertained to luncheon at the Mansion House.

On his return to India, however, friction with the home government grew apace. The first question on which they did not see eye to eye was the suggested treaty with the Amir of Afghanistan, Habibullah Khan, of which the home government approved, but to which the Viceroy was opposed as lacking in strength and likely to expose India to further difficulties. At the commencement of the negotiations between Sir Louis Dane and the Amir, Lord Curzon sent an amiable message to the Amir in which he expressed himself " confident that the negotiations will result in mutual and lasting benefit to both your Highness' country and the Government of His Majesty, the King-Emperor" (December 7). In the course of the negotiations the Amir informed Sir Louis Dane that the Viceroy had told him that the King-Emperor concurred in his views as to the necessity of repelling Russian aggression. Mr. Brodrick, the Secretary of State for India, in reporting the matter to the King (January 3, 1905), pointed out that the Amir's statement was inaccurate, and nothing had been said of the King's views but of the views of his government. The King objected strongly to the unauthorised use of his name, and added the autograph comment, " The improper use of my name must be rectified without delay."

As negotiations progressed the Amir became less courteous to Sir Louis Dane, and Lord Curzon recommended the withdrawal of the mission, doubting whether Dane was firm enough for the

subtle Afghan. The cabinet, however, thought that this step would only encourage Russian intrigues and aspirations and advised Curzon to accept the Amir's terms renewing the old treaties. Mr. Balfour, who pithily summed up the situation in a cabinet note to the King on 16th February after an anxious and prolonged sitting of the House of Commons on the matter, added the prophetic note, " Curzon will not like his advice overruled."

The views of the cabinet received the King's approval, to the satisfaction of Mr. Brodrick, though Lord Curzon deplored the " concessions " which had been made, and the Dane Mission continued its negotiations at Kabul. But the only visible results of its labours was the renewal with the then Amir, Habibullah Khan, of the treaty formerly made with his father, with an increase of the British annual subsidy to him from twelve to eighteen lakhs of rupees. Lord Curzon thought that more might have been obtained from the Amir, but King Edward and the British government thought it better to accept what the Amir had offered of his own free will than to strive to obtain larger concessions by pressure. The treaty secured the friendship and confidence of the Amir, though it " disgusted " Curzon. The whole question was one which brought out very strongly the wide divergence of opinion that existed between men apparently well qualified to give advice respecting India. The King's usual inclination was to " back up the man on the spot," but there were occasions, such as this, when his love for a treaty that implied friendship and confidence on both sides overbore his desire to place the fullest reliance in the judgement of the man who was nearer to the centre of disturbance.

For the time being the treaty had the effect of improving British relations with the Amir, and throughout 1906 there was increasing friendliness. On 23rd July 1906 Mr. Morley suggested to the King that the Amir should receive the high distinction of the G.C.B., but other political advisers demurred, and in the event the Amir was honoured with the more modest G.C.M.G.

On 15th September 1906 the Amir held a great Durbar at Kabul, in which he informed his chiefs of the Viceroy's invitation to him to visit India, and of his acceptance of it. He explained that the visit would be purely one of friendship and courtesy, all political questions having been finally settled by the treaty of 1905. By the close of the year the Amir, with his escort and a

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large following of chiefs, reached the frontier. He was received with much ceremony at Calcutta on 28th January, after a great review of 30,000 troops in his honour at Agra. From Calcutta he proceeded to Bombay. Though the visit had no direct political aim, and scarcely succeeded in an increase of friendly relations, the Amir declared himself genuinely pleased with his welcome. He left Peshawar on his return home on 7th March 1907. The King was greatly interested in the Amir's tour and reception, and at his request both Lord Minto, the new Viceroy, and Mr Morley, the new Secretary of State for India, wrote fully on the details The King sent to the Amir at Agra a telegram of welcome, and constantly expressed delight at the success of the visit.

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But with his return to Kabul the Amir's attitude towards England began to change. He showed unwillingness to endorse the Anglo-Russian Convention relating to Afghanistan which maintained the *status quo*, and in the Zakkha Khel and the Mohmand rebellions of 1908 did not prevent his subjects from aiding the rebels. Mr. Morley kept the King in continuous touch with events, and noted with regret that the Amir seemed determined to give trouble by his ambiguous attitude.

On 20th August 1908 Lord Minto wrote to the King that the Amir was turning out badly and was yielding to growing Russian pressure in Central Asia. He agreed with the King that a strong hand was needed for Indian government. To this the King replied from Rufford Abbey on 10th September 1908 :

My dear Minto—Let me express my warmest thanks for your long and interesting letter of 20th ultimo.

The account you give me of the political situation in Afghanistan seemed to me so grave that I sent your letter on to Sir E. Grey to read and urged him to give me his views. I now send you a copy of them, which I trust will be considered satisfactory by you as far as they go.

The protracted refusal on the part of the Amir to acknowledge the information sent to him relative to the Russo-British Convention by our Government is much to be regretted. As he also looks upon himself as a civilised Sovereign his conduct can only be looked upon as highly discourteous and but a poor return for the civility and hospitality he met with on visiting British India last year.

However, I still live in hopes that hostilities between the two countries may be avoided, and that you may have reason

to alter your present views "that we may possibly be forced before long into a war with Afghanistan"! Such a war, especially at the present moment, would be a national misfortune! Therefore every possible effort should be made to prevent it.

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I have fully noted all your remarks about the "unrest" in India, and can only hope that you and your Government will be able by strong measures to ensure a more satisfactory state of affairs.

After a 3 weeks' "cure" at Marienbad, from which I have greatly benefited, I am now the guest of Lord and Lady Savile for Doncaster Races at this charming old place, and next week go to Scotland for a stay of some weeks.

Trusting that these lines will find you in the best health, and that the strain of your arduous and responsible duties is not too much for you, and with kind regards to Lady Minto, believe me, very sincerely yours,

EDWARD R. & I.

V

The chief Indian problem which had to be faced by the home government during the course of the King's reign was a delicate question concerning military administration upon which the two men who were most concerned, Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener, both great friends of the King, held diametrically opposing views. There had been for some time rumours of friction between the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, and of threats of resignation by one or the other. These had been contradicted, and then repeated. In September 1904 Lord Kitchener had offered to resign, owing to the incessant delays which threatened all his reforms, and he made no secret of the fact of his dissatisfaction with the "incurable" dual control of military administration by the Viceroy and himself. The friction was in no way a personal question between Curzon and Kitchener, but arose from causes which had existed at least from 1878, and had been commented on by many Commanders-in-Chief, including Lord Roberts, Sir George White, and Sir Donald Stewart. The point at issue was not the question of the supremacy of the civil government over the army, but solely as to the relative position of two great military authorities, the Commander-in-Chief and the military member of the Viceroy's Council. Although the nominal responsibility for the army belonged to the Commander-

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in-Chief, the military member of the Viceroy's Council, Sir Edmond Elles, was "really omnipotent in military matters," and his actions and influence were strenuously objected to by Lord Kitchener, who urged that he was entitled to be regarded as the expert adviser of the government of India on purely military matters, and that when he submitted proposals on these affairs to the Viceroy the latter was perfectly free to accept them or reject them as he thought fit, but they should not be criticised by the military member of Council, who was not only junior in rank, but also inferior in military experience On the other hand, the Viceroy, who was prepared for some modification, contended that it was necessary for him to be able to call for the advice of the military member on all matters, whether purely military or not, and in this view he was supported by the whole of his Council (with the exception of the Commander-in-Chief) and by Anglo-Indian opinion generally. He argued that the present system worked well, and that Lord Kitchener's proposal to get the Army Department under his sole control was an attempt to substitute for the existing military authority of the government of India a military autocracy in the person of the Commander-in-Chief.

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On 9th May 1905 Mr. Brodrick, the Secretary of State for India, reported the whole problem of the dual control to the King, and announced that in order to assist the home government in deciding between these conflicting views, a committee consisting of himself, Earl Roberts, Sir George White, Sir James Mackay, General Gordon, Sir E. Law (late legal member of the Viceroy's Council) and Lord Salisbury had been appointed. Three weeks later, 27th May, Mr. Brodrick sent the findings to the King. The committee reported unanimously that the strictly military portions of the army administration should be under the exclusive control of the Commander-in-Chief, and that it was not desirable that any other member of the Council should speak as an expert on military problems pure and simple, though there should be another member, having charge of certain business specified in the Sub-Committee's report, sitting on the Viceroy's Council. A recommendation was added that, in order to carry out the proposed changes, the then military member, Major-General Sir Edmond Elles, should be relieved of his duties as soon as this could be done without pecuniary loss to himself.

The King expressed general approval of the proposed compromise and sanctioned the India Office dispatch of 31st May embodying the reforms. Sir Douglas Haig wrote to Lord Knollys (June 22, 1905): "We soldiers certainly owe the King a great deal of gratitude for the important share he has taken in bringing about this satisfactory change."

Lord Curzon, however, in letters to the King, Lord Knollys, and Mr. Brodrick, expressed his strong dissent from the government's settlement and his indignation at their indifference to the views of the Indian government. So strong was his dissent that early in June he offered his resignation; but the cabinet declined to accept it. Mr. Brodrick, in commenting to the King upon the Viceroy's views (June 27, 1905), reviewed the situation, pointing out that the government's decision had given great satisfaction to Lord Kitchener. On the other hand, the Viceroy regarded the dispatch as reducing the power of the military member of Council unduly, and had telegraphed to the Prime Minister proposing certain modifications. Mr. Brodrick was anxious to meet Lord Curzon's views, but he felt that the committee's decision that there should, on purely military matters, be but one adviser to the Governor-General in Council (which commended itself to the cabinet and also to the Indian Council) must be maintained, and he thought that this could be achieved without affecting Lord Curzon's personal position. On 6th July the Viceroy wrote to Brodrick stating that the new army scheme was unworkable unless modified, and that he had spoken in Council against the scheme. The King, to whom the Viceroy's letter was shown, added the comment: "The tone of the Viceroy's answer is much to be regretted."

Mr. Brodrick then turned to the case of Major-General Sir Edmond Elles, between whom and Lord Kitchener there had been a good deal of friction. It was clear that he could not continue a military member. Mr. Brodrick consequently intimated to Lord Curzon that if Sir Edmond Elles should desire to resign he would be granted compensation for loss of office and would be recommended for the G.C.I.E. In communicating these decisions to the Viceroy Mr. Brodrick requested him to propose a successor to Sir Edmond Elles. Lord Curzon proposed General Sir Edmund Barrow, but the home government objected to the appointment of this officer on the grounds that he was

holding an important military command, that his services might hereafter be required in a still more important one, and that as he had served for eight years in the Military Department, the natural result of his appointment would be that in a short time the old system would be re-established. Lord Curzon, however, made the nomination of Sir E Barrow a personal matter, using what Mr. Brodrick described (July 12) as "strong language" in urging his point of view, and tendered his resignation if it were not accepted.

On 25th July Mr. Brodrick wrote to the King that Curzon and Kitchener were irreconcilable, but he hoped that he might yet bring them to a working agreement. The home government nevertheless remained firm in its refusal to accept Sir E. Barrow, but urged Lord Curzon to withdraw his resignation. This he declined to do. His resignation was therefore laid before the King on 13th August and announced on 21st August, together with the notification that the Earl of Minto was appointed to succeed him. The King, who was at Marienbad, at once sent what Lord Curzon described as "a truly consoling and gracious message" Lord Curzon, in acknowledging the King's tribute to his services, pointed out (August 23) that the one thought which had disturbed him in his enforced resignation was the fear that he might be thought on personal grounds to be deserting the task of conducting to a successful issue the tour of the Prince of Wales, but the King soon put his mind at rest on this point. He now (September 15, 1905) wished Curzon to meet the Prince and Princess either on their arrival at Bombay or on their way out to Aden or Suez, desiring the Prince to have some conversation with the outgoing Viceroy on Indian matters and also to thank him "personally" for "the great interest you have shown in so practical a manner relative to their approaching visit to the vast Indian Empire."

There was some embarrassment owing to the anticipated arrival of Lord Minto at Bombay, according to the programme, near the same date as the Prince and Princess. The King, in conference with Mr Brodrick, the Secretary of State for India, on 13th September, had decided that Lord Minto should go as soon as possible to India, and that Lord Curzon should meet him at Bombay, when Lord Minto would assume the government. Lord Curzon, however, was to remain in India in order to be

received "as a private personage" by the Prince of Wales, Lord Minto going on to the Viceregal seat at Calcutta and being excused attendance at the subsequent festivities at Bombay "under special circumstances."

These decisions were telegraphed to Lord Curzon, who in reply suggested that Lord Minto should hasten his departure from England so as to arrive at Bombay at least by 27th October, but should arrive as a "private personage" so that Lord Curzon might carry through the ceremonies of receiving the Prince of Wales. Mr. Brodrick, the Secretary of State for India, in forwarding to the King Lord Curzon's reply (September 16, 1905), feared the suggestions would be difficult to carry out. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining a passage Lord Minto could not possibly arrive on 27th October. Mr. Brodrick further submitted that on Lord Minto meeting Lord Curzon at Bombay he should become Viceroy, urging that it was undesirable to allow him to arrive at Calcutta as a private person, while the outgoing Viceroy was carrying through the ceremonies of receiving the Prince of Wales.

The King agreed with Mr. Brodrick, but the delay in Lord Minto's arrival paved the way to a happy compromise. In the event the Prince and Princess of Wales arrived at Bombay some eight days before Lord Minto. Curzon therefore was able to meet the Prince and Princess on their arrival on 9th November, and also Lord Minto on his arrival eight days later, when the Prince of Wales was beginning his tour in Central India. Next morning Lord Minto saw Lord Curzon off to England with full leave-taking ceremony.

Throughout the struggle between Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener the King preserved an unbiassed attitude. He would have liked to see a compromise reached in a truly British fashion. But with the discomfiture of Lord Curzon the King's sympathy went out to him, and he at once suggested that an honour should be bestowed upon the home-coming Viceroy. But Mr. Balfour and Mr. Brodrick, who had supported Lord Kitchener throughout the controversy, strenuously resisted the proposal. In the April of the following year the King again urged, this time on the new Liberal Prime Minister, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, that Curzon's services in India were worthy of an earldom, but Campbell-Bannerman proved as adamant as Balfour, and in the event Lord

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Curzon had to wait two years longer before he received the honour which King Edward thought worthy of his services.

VI

With Lord Curzon's resignation a new era opened for India, an era of acute unrest and attempted reform. Lord Minto, the new Viceroy, was a Liberal descended from patrician Whigs, and he had his share of the ideas that belonged to that sect since its rise at the revolutionary settlement. His temperament was theirs, and to such habits of mind he joined the spirit of the soldier. He had seen active service under Roberts in India; he had fought on the side of the Turks against Russia, and his friendly feeling for the Ottoman never altogether left him. As Governor-General of Canada he had acquired insight into the working technicalities of public administration in a free parliamentary system. His accession to office almost coincided with the fall of the Conservative ministry in England, and the replacement of Mr. Brodrick as Secretary of State for India by Mr. John Morley. Morley, although he had had but little previous experience of Indian affairs, soon evolved a policy of his own which met with the full approval of the Viceroy. This policy had a twofold aim, the inauguration of measures of reform which should admit natives to the Viceregal and Executive Councils and at the same time should firmly repress the agitation of the extremists. Unrest in India was spreading; and Morley, who sympathised with native claims to share in the government of their country, believed that contentment would be the fruit of a combination of a steady development of self-government combined with a steady assertion of law and order.

The main cause of the unrest was political. Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal in 1905 had started an agitation which rapidly passed into a demand for Home Rule, with the consequent overthrow of British rule, and into a general animosity against Europeans. Throughout 1907 there were many mischievous agitators at work in various parts of the country, and rioting began in the Punjab and in Bengal.

Early in May 1907 the King warned Morley of the Pan-Islamic movement and anti-Christian meetings, and urged him

not to be "lulled by few patriotic meetings." He requested full reports on the situation not only from Mr. Morley, but also from the Prime Minister and the Viceroy. The Prime Minister at once informed him that energetic action was to be taken against Indian sedition, and Lord Minto dwelt at length on the state of affairs in the Punjab, expressing his anxiety about the future. The King, considerably perturbed, kept these letters by him for future reference.

On 14th August Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in a cabinet letter to the King related that Morley had reported that the Commander-in-Chief in India wanted a drastic Press Act, especially for the army. But Morley and the cabinet were adverse to this proceeding. The King instructed Major Frederick Ponsonby to reply (August 19):

With reference to your account of the proceedings of the Cabinet on the 14th inst., the King hopes the Cabinet realise the grave responsibility they have assumed in refusing to accede to a request put forward by not only the Commander-in-Chief in India but also by the Viceroy and his Council.

While a great deal may be said in support of the contention that to pass a law specially directed against the press in its relations to the army might be tantamount to admitting the existence of danger in the army, and might, therefore, tend to increase rather than diminish the mischief, the King sincerely hopes the Cabinet will carefully consider the question whether some stringent laws should not be passed with regard to the press *generally*.

The freedom of the press, although an undoubted boon to a free people under self-government, is apt to be abused by a people under the autocratic Government of another race.

There is no doubt the disloyal press is mainly responsible for the trouble we have had in India, and the King would, therefore, impress on you the importance of discussing this question with as little delay as possible.

The King's suggestions were eventually adopted at a cabinet meeting on 28th May 1908, and a Newspaper Act was introduced early next year and passed on 8th June, which provided stronger penalties for exciting disaffection.[1]

[1] On 22nd July 1908 Mr. Tilak was sentenced to six years' transportation and fined £66 for publishing seditious articles in the Poona weekly, *Kasari*. In October 1908 the *Bande Matarami* was confiscated. But it was subsequently found necessary in 1910 to introduce an even stronger Press Act, and by its terms local governments were given the power of suppressing "mischievous" newspapers without prosecution.

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Indian agitators, however, were by no means content to confine their activities to India. On 29th February 1909 Pandit Shymamaji Krishnavarma, who had founded a lectureship at Oxford in 1904, wrote from Paris a letter to *The Times* justifying the recent outrages in India. Other articles of like nature appeared in the *Indian Sociologist*, printed in London. The King viewed the mischievous articles with concern and asked Morley to take steps to prevent their recurrence. Morley, after making inquiries, found that no action could be taken against Krishnavarma, but promptly instituted proceedings against the printer of the *Indian Sociologist.*

The King's concern was still further increased when on 1st July 1909 Sir William Curzon-Wyllie and Dr. Cawas Lalcaca were shot dead in London, after a students' entertainment at the Imperial Institute, by an Indian student named Madha Lao Dhingra.[1] Sir William Curzon-Wyllie was at that time Political A.D.C. to the Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley, who at once reported the matter to the King. The King added the autograph comment (July 1):

> Please thank and say the sooner the Indian students are sent back to their own country the better. They fall into bad hands and return to India to sow sedition.

VII

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Meanwhile two jubilees of very important events in Indian history had occurred. The year 1907 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Indian Mutiny, and the King was anxious that it should be celebrated by a modest distribution of honours and decorations to general officers who had fought in that war.

"His Majesty," Major Frederick Ponsonby wrote to General Sir Arthur Wynne on 25th February 1907, "naturally does not wish anything done that might in any way wound the susceptibilities of his Indian subjects, but thinks there would be no harm in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Mutiny by a judicious distribution of honours The King hopes you will discuss this with the Secretary of State and prepare a list for his approval.

"In connection with this, the King wishes the name of Major-General Sir Albert Williams to be considered for a C.B."

[1] Dhingra was hanged on 23rd July.

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A very strong objection was made to the King's suggestion on the ground that the decoration of those officers who had assisted to quell the Indian Mutiny might render Indian unrest even more marked than before, and even the King's nominee, the veteran Sir Albert Williams, was refused recognition by the India Office.

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Eighteen months later, however, there was better cause for rejoicing. On 1st November 1908, the fiftieth anniversary of the assumption by the Crown of the direct government of India, the King-Emperor issued a masterly message to the princes and peoples of India which was read by the Viceroy in the Durbar held at Jodhpur on 2nd November. The message, after repeating and confirming the declarations and assurances contained in Queen Victoria's famous message of 1858, reviewing the material progress of India during the last fifty years and paying a warm tribute to the loyalty of the feudatory chiefs and the native army and to the work of the Civil Service, expressed the sovereign's regret at the seditious agitation and disorders which had recently occurred in certain parts of India, and his determination firmly to repress them, but added that he would not be deterred by them from giving effect to the plans of progress and reform submitted to him by the Secretary of State and the Government of India. The message was a worthy successor to Lord Derby's proclamation of 1858, and the King had no little hand in shaping it, though the original draft was Morley's.[1]

The scope of the reform plans indicated in the message was explained by Lord Morley in the House of Lords on 17th December 1908. There were to be no material changes in the administrative system, but Indians were to be admitted to a larger share of government, and permission was to be made for the admission of natives to the provincial councils. The proposed reforms met with enthusiasm in India, but the King was by no means so enthusiastic over one of the proposed changes of constitutional importance, and the incident well displays the firmness which the King frequently encountered in his dealings with his ministers. The suggestion that native members should be admitted to the Viceroy's Council had received the cabinet's approval as early as 3rd May 1907. The King, however, and many members of the House of Lords, objected to the proposal on the ground that it

[1] For wording, see Appendix II.

might give offence to native princes, and it was not until nearly two years later that Mr. Sinha, an eminent Hindu lawyer, was suggested as a suitable member of the Viceroy's Council. On 24th February 1909 Lord Morley had a long audience with the King.

"He told me," Morley related to Minto, "that he had written to you at the time of my audience and was sure that I had informed you how strongly he felt. I said I had done that, but the withdrawal of the native member would now be taking the linch-pin out of the car. His tone was that of earnest but kindly remonstrance." [1]

The King and other keen opponents of the suggested appointment, amongst whom were Lord Lansdowne and Lord Curzon, eventually caused Morley to waver. As Lord Knollys wrote to the King, who was at Biarritz, on 6th March 1909

Lord Morley told Lord Esher that he would think over again the question of a native member of the Council, and Lord Esher thinks that if he could he would be very glad to withdraw from his position He finds this rather difficult, however, after the pledge which he has given to the Viceroy and to the Public, and he is afraid now that if he were to withdraw, the natives would think he was "playing fast and loose" with them. He telegraphed to Lord Minto after he had seen Your Majesty on the subject and told him what you had said.

On 10th March Lord Morley, at the Cabinet Council, took the decisive step of proposing Sinha as the legal member of the Viceroy's Council, and the cabinet unanimously approved. Morley put his point of view to the King that day, though he feared the King was not in full agreement with him.

"It was felt," he wrote, "that if this, or some such appointment, were not made, one effect of a most disastrous kind would be certain to follow. This effect would be to throw into the ranks of the extremists and irreconcilables—now so very formidable a body—vast numbers of wavering people in India, who have been happily induced by the policy of general reforms to throw themselves on the side of government. To this point of policy Lord Morley respectfully solicits your Majesty's notice, as worthy of much attention in a somewhat difficult situation. . . .

"The Viceroy assures Lord Morley that his impression is

[1] *Recollections,* vol. ii. p. 299.

that there is a decided majority in his Council in favour of an Indian member, on condition of individual member being efficient and not chosen as racial representative. . . .

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" Lord Morley begs your Majesty to believe how fully alive he is to the moral responsibility incurred by him in advising a step of this sort. It is an act of high policy. Nothing but a strong conviction of its expediency—almost amounting to necessity—for the contentment and stability of your Majesty's Indian dominions would have induced Lord Morley so earnestly to ask for an assent which your Majesty, on grounds most easily understood by him, may hesitate to give."

The next day Lord Morley obtained his third reading for the Indian Councils Bill, and at a second meeting of the cabinet it was unanimously decided to recommend Sinha's appointment. Morley wrote again fully to the King, stating that he had no desire to shift any atom of responsibility from himself to the Crown. Morley enclosed with his letter the formal submission. To the first of these two letters the King replied from Biarritz on 12th March.

The King regrets that he cannot change his views on this subject and has thought it over quite as much as Lord Morley has. He remains, however, of opinion that this proposed step is fraught with the greatest danger to the maintenance of the Indian Empire under British rule. The reasons are well known to the Secretary of State, as they are to the Viceroy, but as the latter apparently is putting great pressure on the subject, and at the last meeting of the Cabinet Council the Government were unanimous on the subject, the King has no other alternative but to give way much against his will. He however wishes it clearly to be understood that he protests most strongly at this new departure. God grant that the Government in India may not suffer from it. Beyond that the King can say no more.

As Lord Morley as well as the Viceroy recommends a Mr. Sinha the King has no other alternative but to agree to his appointment to the Viceroy's Council and can only hope that he may turn out trustworthy and efficient.

To the second letter the King replied again with strong feeling, still protesting, but admitting no alternative against a unanimous cabinet. Morley, however, was not content to let the incident close with a forced assent on the part of the King and still endeavoured, in his reply of 17th March, to convert him, adding that he

respectfully recognises the close attention that your Majesty has been pleased to give this embarrassing subject, and he knows only too well the force of all the arguments that have drawn your Majesty to an adverse judgement.

He will not presume to burden your Majesty with further considerations, beyond saying that, in view of the famous promise of Queen Victoria in 1858—a promise never forgotten in India—that race and colour should constitute no bar, it would be a great and undoubted drawback to the warm acceptance of the policy announced in your Majesty's memorable message of last November, if Mr. Sinha were to be excluded from the law Membership of Council, in favour of some English lawyer of second or third rate at home.

Lord Morley will add his firm conviction that this marked fulfilment of Queen Victoria's historic promise will win for your Majesty an exalted and enduring place in the deepest affections of the Indian Subjects of the British Crown.

To this use of Queen Victoria's name the King added the pungent marginal comment (March 20):

This is the answer to my letter! Why he should bring in the name of Queen Victoria I cannot see, nor how it bears on the question. I myself do not think she would have approved of the new departure. I have had to sign the objectionable paper.

Meanwhile the King had been in direct correspondence with Lord Minto on the subject. Minto supported Lord Morley's views. The question, he submitted, was: should the Secretary of State be debarred from recommending any individual for His Majesty's approval for appointment to high office merely because he was a Hindu? and answering his own question Lord Minto urged that the days of racial disability had passed, and that attempts to continue that disability would have very unfortunate results in India. To this the King replied (March 22, 1909):

My dear Minto—Many thanks for your long and interesting letter of 4th instant in which you give me your reasons why you consider it desirable that a Native of India should form part of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

As you hold such strong views on the subject and have given me many cogent reasons for such a new departure, I am very unwilling to differ from you as well as the Secretary of State on the subject. At the same time I hold very strong and possibly

old-fashioned views on the subject, which my son, who has so recently been in India, entirely shares.

During the unrest in India at the present time and the intrigues of the Natives it would I think be fraught with the greatest danger to the Indian Empire if a Native were to take part in the Councils of the Viceroy, as so many subjects would be likely to be discussed in which it would not be desirable that a Native could take part. Besides, if you have a Hindu why not a Mohammedan also? The latter would strongly claim it. If the present view which you so strongly advocate is carried into effect, and you find it does not answer, you will never be able to get rid of the Native again. The Indian Princes, who are ready to be governed by the Viceroy and his council, would greatly object to a Native, who would be very inferior in caste to themselves, taking part in the Government of the country. However clever the Native might be, and however loyal you and your Council might consider him to be, you never could be certain that he might not prove to be a very dangerous element in your Councils and impart information to his countrymen which it would be very undesirable should go further than your Council Chamber.

I have, however, informed the Secretary of State that owing to the great pressure which has been put upon me by my Government, I unwillingly assent, but wish that my protest should remain on record, as I cannot bring myself to change my views on this subject.

That you never repent the important step now made is the ardent wish of yours very sincerely,

EDWARD R. & I.

The King communicated the tenor of this letter to Lord Knollys, who had remained in England. Lord Knollys in reply, 27th March, expressed his approval of the King's "strong letter." Lord Minto, however, was not so pleased, and expressed at length (April 12) his "deep concern" at "so serious a view of the appointment," pointing out that it had received a most hearty welcome through India. To the suggestion that secrecy would no longer be secured at a council meeting, the Viceroy replied that the most secret correspondence with the Secretary of State was seen by natives, "and it is reasonable to suppose that information could much more easily be obtained from them than from an Indian in the high and responsible position of a Member of Council." He further pointed out that instead of Mohammedans being jealous of the appointment of the

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Hindu, they had most warmly welcomed the innovation. In conclusion, Lord Minto pointed out that Sinha's appointment in no way pledged any future Viceroy to continue it, but he believed that Anglo-Indian opinion in India had so rapidly recognised the increasing necessity of utilising the abilities of loyal natives "that in the future the government of India will be more and more anxious for Indian assistance in positions of official authority"

To this lengthy epistle the King replied (May 21, 1909):

My dear Minto—I beg to thank you for your long and interesting letter of the 12th ult. After carefully considering all your arguments, explaining the advantages of the appointment of a Native to your Executive Council, I fear I must adhere to my opinion that the nomination of a Native to your Council will be fraught with considerable danger to the safety and welfare of the Indian Empire.

You yourself admit that the peaceful future of India is very far from being assured. To take, therefore, a very clever Native on to your Executive Council must necessarily be a source of much danger to our rule in the Indian Empire.

I have had an opportunity of discussing the question with several of those who have not lost touch with India, and I find that they all look upon the experiment (for I can call it nothing else) with considerable alarm and dismay.

There is one point you mention which greatly surprises me, which is that secret correspondence with the Secretary of State is seen by Natives, and that secret papers are copied in your office by Natives. This appears to me to be a most dangerous and objectionable practice and I am astonished that it should exist.

Now that it has been decided to have an Indian member on the Executive Council, the Government of India will in future be always obliged, practically though not perhaps theoretically, to replace him by another Indian I am afraid it is the "thin end of the wedge," and it will require a most resolute Viceroy to avoid being forced to nominate one if not two Native Members of his Council.

I can hardly believe that the present appointment of a Hindu will not create great and just irritation among the Mohammedans, and that the latter will not be contented unless they receive an assurance that one of their creed succeeds Mr. Sinha.

With kind regards to Lady Minto, believe me, very sincerely yours, Edward R. & I.

With that the correspondence closed, and a day or two later the King formally approved Mr. Sinha's appointment. In the event the appointment turned out to be a good one, though the King's prediction that "the Government of India will in future be always obliged" to have an Indian on the Council proved to be correct.

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VIII

In the midst of these conflicting arguments for and against the Morley-Minto reforms, the King's interest in the native princes of India and their principal officers never abated. When, on 14th January 1908, Lord Morley informed the King that the Prime Minister of Nepal, Sir Chandra Shamsher Jung, was coming to England, the King promptly expressed a wish to see him on his arrival, as he had met his uncle, who had also been Prime Minister, during his tour in India of 1875–76.[1] Sir Chandra, who arrived in England on 8th May for a ten weeks' stay, was received on 11th May by the King, who recalled the incidents of his tour thirty-two years before. The King's interest was further displayed when, two months later, 14th July 1908, Lord Morley tentatively suggested the G.C.B. "in diamonds" for the ruler of Nepal, though he admitted that it had not so been given to an Indian before. To this suggestion the King made the comments: "I am all for the star of G.C.B. in diamonds being conferred on the Nepalese, and I believe he knows of it, so it will not do to make a change now. Probyn and I agree that it would be right." Three days later Lord Morley reluctantly agreed to his own proposal, provided "that India be put to no expense," and on 21st July, the day before Sir Chandra departed for India, the King made the investiture. The Nepalese Prime Minister was greatly pleased by his reception, and on his return to Nepal in the following August described with enthusiasm his welcome at a Durbar held in his honour at Kathmanda.

1908 — Ætat. 66

To any native ruler who applied to him for advice the King was kindness itself. When, on 5th September 1908, the Maharajah of Cooch Behar wrote complaining of the uncertainty of precedence of Indian princes at the King's Court, the King added the note:

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[1] See Vol. I. p. 390.

1908 — Ætat. 66

The letter from the Maharaja of C.B. is a very proper and nicely worded letter The rank of the Indian princes when they are received in England and British India on official occasions should be once for all clearly defined, and there is no doubt in my mind that they should take precedence over Dukes and other members of the English aristocracy. I shall be anxious to speak to and confer with Lord Morley on the subject, and it will probably be necessary to constitute a Committee of ex-Viceroys and S[ecretaries] of S[tate] for India to inquire into the matter and report to me. These are my strong views.

The subject was promptly investigated by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, who found the greatest possible difficulty in ascertaining not only the precedence, but even the history of Indian rulers He communicated his difficulties to the King (October 19, 1908), who appreciated the obstacles in the way. Eventually a rough system of precedence was drawn up the following year, but for obvious reasons was not made public

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOCIAL SIDE

I

The King's preoccupation with domestic, foreign, and empire affairs never prevented him from fulfilling the very exacting duties of host, landlord, and sportsman, and in these respects his activities varied but little from what they had been while he was Prince of Wales.

His life was passed in an extraordinary exactitude. Every week, almost every hour, was mapped out beforehand; the succession of engagements was almost immutably fixed. From 1904 to 1907 he spent a week each January with the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth. Parliament was opened in state late in January or in February. A visit to Biarritz in the spring, preceded and followed by a stay in Paris, was usually fixed for March, and a Mediterranean cruise would follow. The early days of April would find him in Copenhagen with the Queen in order to celebrate the birthday of his father-in-law, King Christian IX. The opening week of June saw him at Epsom for the Derby and the Oaks, and on the night of the Derby he would entertain all the members of the Jockey Club to dinner at Buckingham Palace. In mid-June he would be at Ascot. Several courts and state dinners would follow. The King would also attend the Horse Shows at Richmond and Olympia. In July and August there would be a round of country house visits where he met at ease his almost unchanging social circle. At the end of July he would stay with the Duke of Richmond for Goodwood. A week later he would be at Cowes for the yachting, passing on to Bolton Abbey to spend "the Twelfth" with the Duke of Devonshire. Early in September he

would stay with Lord Savile at Rufford Abbey to witness the St. Leger at Doncaster, followed by a three weeks' cure at Marienbad (which had replaced both Homburg and Wiesbaden in his affection), and a visit to one or other of the European sovereigns October would see him at Balmoral for the shooting season, and in the last two months of the year he resided at Windsor, or Sandringham, or Buckingham Palace, always, however, spending Christmas and New Year's Day at Sandringham.

The social year would be interspersed with visits to old and valued friends—to Lord Carrington at Daws Hill, Lord Crewe at Crewe Hall, the Gurneys at North Runcton, Lord Rosebery at Mentmore, the Harcourts at Nuneham, Lord Iveagh at Elveden, the Sassoons at Brighton, the Jameses at West Dean Park, Chichester, and the Londonderrys at Wynyard Park. On these occasions the Queen would be most interested in the household arrangements, and would often make a tour of the house while the King chatted with his host and the guests. It was the social round *de luxe*, an era of garden parties, flower shows, horse shows, and race meetings. Every year the King would spend two or three months abroad, from which he would invariably return with improved health and vigour.

As the foremost host in the country the King took a great pride in making his guests at Buckingham Palace, at Windsor, at Sandringham or Balmoral, as comfortable as possible. In London and Windsor the King had perforce to be regal, but at Sandringham and Balmoral he was the county squire and sport-loving host. Sunday at Sandringham was the day on which he made a full tour of the farm, the kennels, and stables, and noted with appraising eye the brood mares, yearlings, and foals. In all these the keen interest and practical knowledge displayed by the King was a remarkable proof of the versatility and accuracy of his memory. Often the visit of inspection would be followed by tea in the Dairy, at which Queen Alexandra would preside, then a gentle walk back through the kitchen gardens, which by now had grown to an immense size. The King loved to take his guests round the hothouses, and when surprise was expressed at their number and size, the King would smilingly reply, "All Persimmon"!

He was an ideal host. His was not the manner of polished civility which is so often merely a cloak for indifference: his extreme courtesy was the outcome not only of good breeding

King Edward VII
from a chalk drawing made at Buckingham Palace
February 1905

and good taste, but of genuine kindness of heart. He always preferred talking to people on their own subjects, and his knowledge of, and memory for, their tastes and hobbies was altogether marvellous. When he took his guests round his places—gardens, stud, or farm—his delight lay not in the display of his wonderful possessions, but in the fact of being able to show each person the things which individually interested and pleased him most. While the racing man felt that he was not called upon to profess a knowledge of gardens or Sèvres china, the garden lover and art collector knew it was not incumbent on them to expatiate upon the merits of racehorses or shorthorns.

King Edward always attended church on Sundays, and he saw to it that carriages were available for those of his guests who wished to attend other services than that of the Church of England. Cardinal Vaughan has narrated how certain guests at Sandringham, taking advantage of there being no Roman Catholic Church there, made Sunday morning a holiday, and were roundly rated by their royal host. But he had travelled abroad so often that he finished by adopting, outwardly at least, some of the freedom of the continental Sunday. The old-fashioned Victorian Sabbath in which one went to church, walked and rested in an atmosphere of religious piety and gloom, began to give place to the freer Sunday of companionable jaunts and relaxations. The King himself enjoyed life so much that he wished every one else to be happy, even if it were Sunday. But it would be wrong to conclude that he was an aggressive Voltairian—rather was he a cheerful Protestant.

Life at Sandringham was delightfully simple. Etiquette was observed only at dinner, and even then only with a moderate strictness—guests usually being placed according to their rank, and decorations being worn. The members of the royal family had breakfast in their own rooms, but for the guests there were "opulent breakfasts" from 9 to 10 A.M. Luncheon was served at two big tables, one presided over by the King, the other by the Queen. Only the seats next to the hosts were reserved, and the guests, except, of course, those invited to sit next to the King or Queen, sat where they wished. The conversation was quite unconventional, and touched on all topics—politics, events of the day, personal matters, theatres, music and painting, and even occasionally on scientific questions.

In the afternoons the Prince and Princess of Wales frequently came from York Cottage to tea, accompanied by their children. "I remember," Sir Felix Semon relates, "how on one of these occasions the Princess of Wales nearly died of laughter because Sir William Broadbent and I could not quickly enough lift the present Prince of Wales and Prince Henry over the large sofas in the hall, behind and over which they played hide and seek."

The King and Queen always tried to put guests at their ease, but on one occasion the King invited for the week-end an aged Bishop who did not succumb to the royal affability. No matter how hard the King tried, he could not succeed in finding a single subject of mutual interest. At last, in despair, the King handed a recent photograph of himself to the Bishop and asked him what he thought of it. The Bishop donned his spectacles, shook his head with a melancholy air, and murmured, "Yes, yes, poor Buller!" [1]

After dinner, usually, a few rubbers of bridge were played. The King was very keen on bridge, and though he played only moderately well, he could criticise mistakes. He was frequently an unlucky card-holder, and thus was delighted if he won. If the cards were really bad he lost interest in the game and made mistakes. Once, after he had complained that his partners always selected cheap suits without giving him the opportunity of announcing something better, his partner, the Hon. Mrs. Keppel, left it to him to make trumps (this was bridge, not auction bridge). He glanced at his cards and said, "I do not know what you will say to it, but I make 'No trumps.'" When he put down his cards (being "dummy") there was not a single trick in his hand. Mrs. Keppel, whose cards were equally bad, and foresaw that her opponents would make a "grand slam," at once replied, "All I can say, Sire, is: God save the King and preserve Mrs. Keppel!" This amused the King so much that when her anticipations were realised he laughed heartily.[2]

The Marquis of Lincolnshire gives a delightful picture of Sandringham in April 1901:

I could hardly realise that the Prince of Wales was King. He seemed so entirely himself, and with all the old surroundings it seems as if the old days were back again. The Queen walked out alone after dinner, and the King remained in the dining-room

[1] Sir Felix Semon's Memoirs. [2] *Ibid.*

and smoked as he used to do. No whist or bridge. When the Queen retired we all went into the smoking-room, which was the same as ever. The Leech pictures, the same furniture, the table where the Equerry wrote the stable orders for the morning, the bowling alley next door, and the whole thing brought back memories of Blandford, Oliver Montague, Christopher Sykes, Henry Calcraft, Bowmont, Andrew Cockerell, Charlie Beresford, Charlie Dunmore, and old Quin.

By contrast, in a picture of Windsor in 1903, the increased formality is obvious :

All the Castle arrangements are very good. Dinner excellent After dinner the ladies and gentlemen go out together, foreign fashion, and the King goes into the furthest drawing-room and smokes The Queen never sits down, and stands in the middle of the centre drawing-room. The King has one bridge table and the Queen another.[1]

II

The King, although fond of travelling, liked to have everything arranged and settled beforehand, and was very particular about the details of his journeys. As soon as he had decided upon going to the Continent—and he generally fixed the date two months in advance—he began by sending for his courier, M Fehr, a Swiss by birth, who had begun by being a courier in a tourist agency. In this capacity he was often entrusted with the arrangements for the journeys of the Prince of Wales, and meeting with the Prince's favour was taken into his service. When at last King Edward ascended the throne M. Fehr became "the King's courier." He was a highly intelligent, very active, and wonderfully able man ; and he knew how to arrange all the particulars of a journey and look after his royal master's interests, without neglecting a single detail.

The staff of servants included two valets and two footmen The first valet, M. Meidinger, was an Austrian by birth. The King, whom he had served for eighteen years, was very much attached to him and allowed him certain familiarities. It was he who woke His Majesty every morning ; and, when he entered the room, the King, still half asleep, regularly asked him the same question, "What's the weather doing to-day, Meidinger ?"

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

Another of the King's faithful servants, almost a friend, was Mr. H. Chandler, the Superintendent of the Wardrobe. When the King was suffering from acute irritation and wanted to "let himself go," he would retire to his room and send for Chandler, upon whom the vials of his wrath could be expended. Chandler was fully prepared to meet any such storm, and when this was over King Edward's one desire was to make amends to any one whose feelings might have been hurt during these occasional outbursts. Yet the King had a remarkable power of self-control—often in very trying circumstances.

The staff of the royal journeys furthermore occasionally included the motor-mechanic, Stamper, who had charge of the King's motor-cars. The King's first trip in a motor-car had taken place two years before his accession when Mr. Scott-Montagu, M.P. (afterwards Lord Montagu of Beaulieu), drove him in a 12 h.p. Daimler at Highcliffe whilst staying with the Cavendish-Bentincks. Motoring was then considered unroyal and *infra dig.* But by March 1902 the King had purchased several cars and had made a long motor tour in France. A few months earlier great efforts had been made to persuade the King to assent to the use of a "motor-coach" at his Coronation. The King was quite ready to assist British industry in this manner, but when it was pointed out that for such a purpose the "motor-coach" would have to be without noticeable vibration, noise, vapour, or smell, the automobile enthusiasts deemed that the impossible had been demanded, and the suggestion fell through.[1] The royal approval of the new means of locomotion, however, did much to forward the popularity of the motor-car in England.[2] Shortly after his Coronation the King had the coach-houses at Windsor, Sandringham, and Buckingham Palace altered to accommodate cars, and later on similar alterations were made for his convenience at Marienbad and Biarritz. His first choice of cars were the Daimler and the Mercedes, and he understood something of their make and possibilities. As a motorist the King was always considerate to the public. Although, being King, he was not amenable to any traffic law, and though speed limits and

[1] *The Autocar*, 9th Dec. 1901.

[2] In 1903 the King became the Patron of the Automobile Exhibition at the Crystal Palace and in 1905 at Olympia. In 1907 he added the title of Royal to the Automobile Club (founded in 1897) and in 1909 to the Aero Club (founded 1908).

police traps had no terrors for his drivers, he showed an example in this respect. The King's cars were, of course, always known by the fact that they alone of all cars in England bore no number plate.

III

As of old, the King continued to patronise the theatre. He did not care much for classical tragedies or Shakespeare, preferring opera, musical comedy, and, above all, modern society pieces containing plenty of subtle and caustic psychology; though when Lady Troubridge once asked him which was his favourite play he answered, after a pause, "A difficult question—I think that the play which impressed me most was *The Corsican Brothers*."[1] One of his favourite playhouses was the Paris Théâtre des Variétés, where, as Prince of Wales, he had so often applauded Mme. Jeanne Granier in Offenbach's operas. The last time that he went there was in 1909 to attend a performance of that amusing satire *Le Roi* There was even a brief reference to himself in the play, and his photograph figured prominently on a table. Accordingly, when the King announced his visit, the management were greatly excited, and it was deemed prudent to replace his name and photograph with that of an imaginary sovereign. But the King, on hearing of this little subterfuge, resisted it forcibly, and the management were obliged to yield to his wishes. When the famous scene came on, he was the first to laugh at it, while the spectators applauded this thoroughly Parisian sense of humour displayed by the "plus Parisien des Parisiens."[2]

Late in the reign the long-contested question whether smoking in theatres should be permitted came before the King's notice. The King was a great smoker, but he never approved of smoking in theatres. In March 1908, when the question was raised by the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Althorp), the King strenuously objected, and pointed out to him (March 28)

> that the practice of smoking in theatres is not allowed or recognised anywhere and that he cannot consent to its adoption in London.

[1] Lady Troubridge's *Memoirs and Reflections*, p. 73 *seq.*

[2] Paoli, *My Royal Clients*, pp. 218-19 The play ran for a short time in London, 1925, when the photograph was that of a mythical monarch.

If certain theatres, who want smoking allowed in the auditorium, wish to cut themselves adrift from the Lord Chamberlain's supervision by applying for a Music Hall Licence from the Council, by all means let them do so.

To saddle the permission to smoke with the intimation about the King's non-attendance would, in His Majesty's opinion, be most injudicious and might lead to all sorts of disagreeable incidents.

The King says that apart from the intolerable annoyance which indiscriminate tobacco-smoking would cause the majority of an ordinary theatre audience, the danger of fire to ladies' dresses from cigars or cigarettes would be always present.

The King suggests you should see the Chairman of the London County Council, and in discussing the matter with him, explain that it is impossible for this concession to be made to the West End theatres, but that if the suburban theatres think that it is the wish of their clientele that smoking in the auditorium should be allowed, it can only be on the understanding that the theatre puts itself in the category of those places of amusement where smoking is already allowed and then leave it to the judgement of the theatre managers either to comply with the terms of their licences from the Lord Chamberlain or to place themselves under the County Council.

Lord Althorp in reply pointed out that ten theatres—not music halls—in the suburbs of London had the County Council's licence to smoke, and that the distinction was rather invidious. But seven months later a compromise was reached between the Lord Chamberlain and the theatre managers. The managers of West End theatres recognised and thoroughly understood that there would be no question of smoking ever being permitted in their theatres, but the managers of suburban theatres might apply for permission to smoke, it being understood that the Lord Chamberlain reserved to himself "his legal right to grant or refuse such application in each individual case."

Although the King was a great smoker, he realised that there were occasions when it was more of a curse than a blessing, and he declined to allow his personal predilections to interfere with what he considered to be the comfort of others.

IV

While unremitting in his devotion to social pleasures, the King neglected few of the public movements with which he had already

identified himself, and every summer the King was constantly at work both in London and the provinces laying foundation-stones and opening new public institutions from cathedrals to docks. Every year his public labours [1] grew more and more conspicuous, and entailed rapid transition from one end of the country to the other.

To the public schools he showed, as before, many marks of favour. He twice visited Eton, once on 13th June 1904, and again on 18th November 1908, when he opened the hall and library which formed the South African War Memorial there. He was at Harrow School on 30th June 1905, and he opened the new buildings of University College School, Hampstead, on 26th July 1907, and a new speech room at Rugby on 3rd July 1909. To Wellington College, founded by his father, he was a frequent visitor, and on 21st June 1909 he attended the celebration of the college's jubilee. He proved his high appreciation of the headmaster, Dr. Bertram Pollock, by nominating him as his personal choice, just before his death in 1910, to the bishopric of Norwich, the diocese in which Sandringham was situated.

The list of his public activities in any one year of his reign is amazing, and is proof of the amount of time the King gave to the encouragement of philanthropic, educational, and commercial activities. On each and every occasion he filled his rôle to perfection.

V

The King's public activities included a keen interest in popular benevolence and hospitals. To his earlier interest in medicine and therapeutics he was always faithful. He gave abundant proofs of his care for general hospitals: he opened a new wing of the London Hospital (June 11, 1903), and laid the foundation-stones of the new King Edward Hospital at Windsor (June 22, 1908) and of the new King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill (July 20, 1909). His last public philanthropic function was to lay the corner-stone of a new wing of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital at Norwich (October 25, 1909). This royal opening of hospitals or new wings was often the wisest way of helping hospitals, for it drew public attention in no small degree to

[1] For detailed list see the article on King Edward VII. in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

their need for financial assistance. The King assisted eagerly in efforts to raise funds for hospitals, and though he shared a not uncommon horror of bazaars, he admitted that "a good deal of money is obtained by blackmailing the unfortunate public."

There were, however, occasions when the King's philanthropic instinct was blunted by incompetence or delay on the part of those in charge of the institutions he wished to help. One such example is that of the Midhurst Sanatorium.

On the King's accession Sir Ernest Cassel gave the King £200,000 to spend on a useful object of his own selection. The King, whilst staying with his dying sister, the Empress Frederick, at Cronberg, had often visited the neighbouring tuberculosis sanatorium of Falkenstein, and was impressed by the methods of treatment and by the results obtaining there. He now decided to found with Sir Ernest's gift a like model in England, and at once consulted his friend Sir Felix Semon. "What we require," he said to Semon, "is a Sanatorium for the poorer middle classes. Rich people can avail themselves of private sanatoria, the really poor ought to be provided for by municipalities and institutions of public benevolence, but between these two classes there is a stratum of educated yet indigent patients, such as clergymen, teachers, governesses, clerks, young officers, persons skilled in art, etc. They cannot afford the big sums charged by private sanatoria, whilst they are too proud or too bashful to avail themselves of public charity. These people hitherto have not all been provided for, and my Sanatorium is principally meant to take care of them. They are to pay a *small* sum, and this for two reasons: they are not to be degraded into paupers, and the institution is to be self-supporting. If they themselves should be unable to pay anything, no doubt their relatives or employers will be glad to pay a small sum for them during the few months they will have to stay in the Sanatorium. In particularly deserving cases, in which no help can be afforded, a few patients may, by way of exception, be accepted free of expense. At the same time I do not wish to deprive entirely rich people who may desire to enter such a model institution (I particularly wish that it should be not only devoted to treatment but also to scientific work) of such a chance. There will be, I think, about 100 beds altogether. Of this a small number, say about ten, are to be reserved for such well-to-do patients, who will

have greater comforts and greater privacy; but for that privilege they will have to pay much higher fees than are asked for ordinary private sanatoria. I do not wish that such sanatoria should justly complain of unfair competition. Yet, by admitting rich patients under the exceptional conditions I have named, our Sanatorium will obtain considerable sums which no doubt will be needed for its existence."

Semon doubted whether they would succeed in harmoniously bringing together such heterogeneous elements in the same institution, and that sufficient rich patients would be forthcoming. By way of reply the King referred to the example of Falkenstein—where amalgamation of classes had proved feasible.

The King, having sketched the broad lines, now formed a committee of Sir William Broadbent, Sir Francis Laking, and Sir Felix Semon—all Royal Physicians—to proceed further. Semon urged that, as none of them had had technical experience of sanatoria, three prominent authorities on sanatoria should be added, and he recommended Sir Richard Douglas Powell, Sir Hermann Weber, and Dr. Charles Theodore Williams. The King consented, though not without scruples concerning Weber.

Then began a period of work and responsibility. At first the King was very enthusiastic and took an active part. No detail was too small for his attention. He inspected Semon's correspondence with the senior physician of the Falkenstein Sanatorium, Dr. Besold, whom he wished to be the technical head, but the estimated expenses of terrain, building, and upkeep would have left hardly enough to give Besold as much as he was then receiving at Falkenstein, and the committee were unanimous that the managing physician must not be allowed to practise privately. Thus the proposal that Besold should take charge came to nothing.

In addition, the committee nominated two secretaries—Dr. (afterwards Sir Percival) Horton-Smith-Hartley and Dr. (afterwards Sir) John Broadbent, eldest son of Sir William Broadbent, the chairman of the committee—at an honorarium of £300 for the first year of work. The King had repeatedly urged thriftiness on the committee, and was greatly irritated by these proposals. He at once sent for Semon, and demanded why two secretaries were appointed. Semon explained the amount of labour involved, etc.—but at every moment was impatiently interrupted.

At last, when the King could no longer counter the weighty reasons for appointing two secretaries, he concentrated his whole anger on the younger Broadbent's nomination. "I don't want any jobbery in my affairs!" he exclaimed repeatedly, and urged the invidiousness of family influence. When Semon appeasingly remarked that it was hard that a father should not recommend his son, whom he knew to be able, for the only reason that he was his son, the King, taking hold of Semon's coat-button, cleverly checkmated him with, "You may say what you like—I know that *you* would not have done it," and Semon's defence crumpled.

The affair ended by the King consenting reluctantly, though the second secretaryship was abolished immediately the building was finished.

The committee's slowness in deciding upon a site also annoyed the King. When at last the committee selected the ideal spot—Midhurst—the King's enthusiasm had greatly cooled and his appreciation was lukewarm. More delay was occasioned over the building plans, and the King's interest steadily waned, although his displeasure concerning unavoidable retardations was no less vividly manifest. The royal dissatisfaction reached its highest point when just before building operations were commenced difficulties arose with regard to the water-supply. This time it was much more justified than on previous occasions. In spite of the vendor's assurances that splendid water would be found at a certain depth, no water was found; and when at last water was found, it was in a stratum of such incredibly fine sand that even with most modern filtration it could not be cleared. The water was like pea-soup—and the fine sand obstructed all filters. In the result the committee had to erect a pumping station and a reservoir, with a considerable increase in expenses.

Semon acted as "lightning conductor" for the King's indignation when the unpleasant news of the failure to secure a water-supply reached him. This time the King's anger knew no bounds. He would not listen to any excuses, and wound up by saying, "I will tell you something: you doctors are nearly as bad as the lawyers, and God knows that will say a great deal!" As an experienced courtier Semon should have feigned contrition; instead he laughed right out. For a moment the King was quite startled, then he too saw the joke and began to laugh.[1]

[1] Sir Felix Semon's Reminiscences.

But he had now reached the conclusion that the committee was a most unbusinesslike body. The day after the inauguration of the Sanatorium, 13th June 1906,[1] four years after the Sanatorium had been suggested, the King in a rescript thanked the committee for their labours, but announced his decision of reorganising the administration of the institution The technical and financial management was to be in the hands of a new committee of which the ubiquitous Esher was to be one, and of which only Laking and Treves were representatives of the medical profession; whilst the previous committee, plus half a dozen other well-known consultants, were formed into an ornamental consultative body, which could advise on scientific questions and send a visiting delegate once a month to report By now the King had entirely lost his interest, and only for honour's sake continued to occupy himself with the institution.[2]

But although the King's interest in Midhurst Sanatorium had thus declined, his interest in the London hospitals never wavered. Whenever Lord Knutsford, the chairman of the London Hospital, visited Sandringham the King always called him aside and inquired about the future of the hospital and whether it would be possible to keep up the voluntary efforts. He was a firm believer that the public would contribute willingly if satisfied with the management of the hospitals, and he was most anxious that his fund, "King Edward's Hospital Fund," should be the means of placing them on a sound financial footing. His earlier endeavours as Prince of Wales to provide a clear £100,000 to £150,000 per annum for the hospitals now met with success. "The Prince of Wales Hospital Fund," which he had founded in 1897,[3] and which was now called the "King Edward Hospital Fund," had up to 1901 provided about £50,000 per annum, but during the ten years of his reign, 1901–1910, this was increased until in 1909 the sum of £153,000 was provided, and in 1910 £158,000. To-day the fund distributes well over £300,000 yearly to hospitals in London.[4]

Particularly was the King interested in the prevention and cure of cancer, and he was always glad to hear from his medical

[1] The King had laid the foundation stone on 3rd November 1903.
[2] Sir Felix Semon's Reminiscences.
[3] See Vol. I. pp 619 *seq.*
[4] See *The Times*, 16th December 1925.

friends of the latest efforts in that direction. On 23rd October 1908 he wrote to Sir Frederick Treves:

Many thanks for your most interesting letter. Your visit to the Radium Institute in Paris must have been of the greatest value to you. We must indeed endeavour to have one in London, and we can I hope count on the generosity of *one* individual you are in communication with, and I know my present host would gladly also assist. My greatest ambition is not to quit this world till a real cure for cancer has been found, and I feel convinced that radium will be the means of doing so!

The "*one* individual" was Sir Ernest Cassel.

The King's frank admission that his "greatest ambition is not to quit this world till a real cure for cancer has been found" expressed a hope which was not destined to be realised. Yet he helped in no small degree the cause of cancer research. He had himself been cured of a malignant growth by the use of radium, and his conviction that radium would be the real cure for cancer was a surprisingly good intuition.

VI

Prior to his advent to the throne, King Edward had known little of the cares of state, and it was perhaps inevitable that the burden of responsibility which he assumed in his sixtieth year should have had some effect on his character and outlook on life. With the assumption of the Crown the King lost some of his old elasticity and vivacity, and the *bon viveur* of the heir-apparency was now the more cautious sovereign. Usually amiable and serene, often extraordinarily tender, with an almost feminine gentleness of sentiment, he occasionally—especially in the last few years of his life—became deeply melancholy and depressed, and would cogitate gloomily on the disadvantages of being a king. Now and then he would wonder, especially after the Bosnian crisis and during the Lords' imbroglio, whether it would not be better to avoid a sea of troubles by abdicating; but Edward the Seventh was no coward, and though times of depression came to him, as to every other man, he quickly resumed the guise of a happy monarch such as the world imagined him to be. Towards the end of his life he began to dread old age and seclusion, and

was at his best in an atmosphere of quiet gaiety. His constant bronchial trouble, too, was by now undermining his constitution, and the resultant sudden explosive bursts of anger frequently alarmed even those who knew him well; but his natural kindliness triumphed again so quickly, and he made such ample amends to any one who had excited his anger, that all resentment vanished.

Apart from this increased caution, apart from the occasional depression and passionate outbursts, there seemed to be but little change in the King's character; but he was less apt now to insist on the minutiæ of the royal prerogatives and duties than he had been earlier in the reign. Outwardly he continued to cultivate a general respect for all things of the mind, but he displayed a curious kind of mental inability to study books, though he read newspapers abundantly. Through conversation and the study of the daily press, the errors of which were corrected in interviews with this or that minister, the King had acquired a marvellous fund of information. His memory was amazing: he seemed unable to forget. He rarely thought things out, but often, as though by intuition, solved a puzzle at a stroke. He did not waste time untying knots; he cut them

The pleasures in which he frankly indulged were those which appealed to the greater number of his subjects. He loved a good race meeting, a good dinner, and a good game of bridge. In society he was the benevolent autocrat who felt the same interest in it that an inventor feels in the perfected machine; and no wonder, for he practically invented London society in the form in which it was to endure for so many years. His open indulgence in sport and other recreations brought him into personal touch with the great mass of the population, whose approval he valued. There were occasions, however, when public approval was less cordial, and on one occasion he had a rather cool reception at Ascot when driving up the course. For the last race of the day, however, his horse was the favourite, and fulfilled hopes by winning. The crowd now surged in front of the royal enclosure and cheered him heartily—a greeting which he acknowledged with his unfailing courtesy, remarking, however, to Lord Carrington with a smile, "They are in a better temper than they were this morning, aren't they?" That was King Edward all over. There was neither malice nor false pride in him.

He could never be described as a great talker; he preferred to listen, especially to good stories, unmalicious gossip, and practical businesslike suggestions. After his accession he became much more discreet in speech, and there is no case on record that as a sovereign he ever made an oral *faux pas*. Surely this is an amazing fact when one realises that most of his public utterances were extempore and that he rarely read a speech!

His *savoir faire* and tact in all relations were conspicuous, and there are many instances of his supreme courtesy and the almost flattering appropriateness of his remarks. Lord Birkenhead recalls [1] his first meeting with the King at Lord and Lady Savile's house, shortly after the first general election of 1910, when the Liberals lost 100 seats, and their continuance in office seemed problematical, as they were dependent upon the uncertain Irish vote. So critical did the situation become that many cabinet ministers spoke openly of the prospect of an early resignation. It seemed quite possible that the Conservatives might be called upon to form a government at short notice, and it occurred to King Edward that he had not made the acquaintance of some of the younger members of the party, such as Mr. F. E. Smith, as Lord Birkenhead then was, who had emerged between the years 1906 and 1910.

> He accordingly asked Lady Savile to give a party, and himself suggested almost all the names of those who should be invited. When he came into the room, he walked round the circle shaking hands with those whom he already knew, while those whom he did not were presented to him. When it came to my turn, he said, "Ah yes! I read your speeches with growing interest."
>
> This has always seemed to me an exquisitely polite thing for a great King to say to a young man. Consider, for instance, the implication—that he had always been a student of these efforts and had noted a culmination of value and interest. The study may have been imaginative, but it was at least a very kindly imagination.

One of the King's most fascinating characteristics was his sense of humour. On the great ceremonial occasions he could be as grave and dignified as the occasion warranted, but there is one incident on record in which his sense of humour proved greater than his sense of dignity. Within a few days of his

[1] In the *Sunday Times*, March 15, 1925.

return from his visit to Berlin in February 1909 he attended a meeting of the Privy Council The effect of the military tone of the Kaiser's court had made him desirous of a more formal atmosphere at the Council, and he altered some of the arrangements and desired that uniform should be worn. The Archbishop of York, who was also to be present, was duly given the hint to appear in full archiepiscopal robes. On 15th February the Council was held. Here in addition to the Archbishop was the diminutive Lord Northcote. As the Archbishop was retiring after kissing the royal hand he backed into Lord Northcote, but owing to the padded nature of his robes and Northcote's diminutive size the prelate was entirely unaware that an ex-Governor-General was entangled somewhere in his vestments; the King stepped forward as if to assist, but realising that he could do little to extricate the unfortunate peer, stopped and broke into a hearty laugh, waiting to see on which side of the Archbishop Lord Northcote would ultimately emerge.[1]

It is difficult to interpret King Edward's character in the light of heredity, yet in one quality he proved himself no unworthy scion of the House of Hanover. The eighteenth-century Georges have not a good name in history, but they were all incapable of personal fear, and this quality of courage King Edward possessed in no small degree. He was always unperturbed in the face of bodily danger. The incident at Brussels in 1900 is an excellent example. The would-be assassin, Sipido, fired several shots at him as he sat in a railway carriage. One bullet passed in disagreeable proximity to his head, yet he sat unmoved, and the journey was scarcely interrupted.[2] In some this might have appeared to be affectation, but that word could never be coupled with King Edward. His complete *sang froid* on all such occasions, happily not many, may have been due to some easy quality of fatalism. "A man can only die once," he retorted to an over-anxious minister on one occasion, and that telling phrase gives us the clue to this facet of his character. Yet underneath was the consciousness that he was a King and that a King must not show fear. When Blondin offered to carry him across Niagara when he was but a stripling of eighteen, the King would have accepted the venture at once, and was keen to go. But though he could

[1] Sir Almeric Fitzroy's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 374.
[2] See Vol. I. p. 777.

not be afraid for himself, there were others who could be afraid for him, and he was prevented.[1] When Playfair told him that he might safely put his hand into a cauldron containing boiling lead, he did so at once without hesitation or flinching.[2] So it was when he was face to face with the would-be murderer and his pistol at Brussels. His nerve was perfect. Lord Redesdale recalls also the quiet courage with which he cleared the decks for action and made ready for the operation which, in 1902, might easily have cost him his life. He was not afraid of the chance of death then, nor did he show any signs of fear when the reality came eight years later.

In appearance the King seemed older than his age, though his "beaming blue eyes" gave evidence of his youthfulness of spirits. Though just a little above middle size, he appeared somewhat shorter than he really was owing to a tendency to stoutness. He was always *soigné* and well-groomed, but never foppish, and he expected his entourage to be well dressed. His agility was remarkable considering his age and corpulence. In movements he was energetic and rapid; in speech and thought alert. Always full of plans for the next day; he disliked rest and inactivity. He had a splendid appetite at all times, and never toyed with his food. Though moderate almost to abstemiousness in drinking, he was an excessive smoker of cigars and cigarettes. His giant cigars occasioned chaff and even anxiety, but apart from irritating his throat and causing cough did not seem to make the least impression on his health. He required little sleep, and no matter how late he retired, he was always fully dressed and about by eight o'clock. Whilst simple and unpretending in private intercourse he never forgot that he was King, and he could be regally ceremonious on public occasions, with an instinctive flair for the dignity of his position. He was fond of pomp and punctilio: the smallest slip in dress or decoration did not escape him, and he was strict in rebuke of any mistake, whatever the status of the offender. Sir Felix Semon, who hastened to Chatsworth in January 1907 to attend the King for a "cold," hurrying to be in time for dinner, fastened the star of the Victorian Order on to the right breast of his dress coat. He arrived in the gallery just as the King entered leading the Duchess of Devonshire. As the King passed he nodded to Semon, but stopped a few steps farther on and said a

[1] See Vol. I. p. 95. [2] See Vol. I. p. 73.

few words to Soveral. Soveral with an ironical but not malicious grin on his plain face (the nickname of this amiable cynic was the "blue monkey" on account of his peculiar ugliness, though he was probably the greatest women's favourite of his day) came up to Semon immediately after and said, "His Majesty wished to inform you that the star of the Victorian Order was *usually* worn on the *left* breast!"[1]

Yet the King's eagle eye for errors in dress and insignia did not for one moment obscure the fact that never before in British history had there been a king who combined so much kindness of heart with such regal dignity. Every inch a King, majestic, impressive, and unperturbed; yet also every inch a gentleman, kindly, warm-hearted, and sincere. There are many instances of the King's unusual goodness of heart related in this volume, but two more may perhaps be added

In 1905 preparations were being made for celebrating the centenary of the inventor of the larnygoscope, the celebrated singing master, Manuel Garcia. Sir Felix Semon, as chairman of the committee, wrote to Lord Knollys that the King of Spain, the veteran's sovereign, and the German Emperor were going to bestow distinctions on the old gentleman, and suggested that as Garcia had lived in London for fifty years the King might be inclined to take cognizance of the rare celebration. The King at once answered, through Lord Knollys, that he, too, would be pleased to confer a decoration upon Garcia. He wished personally to congratulate him and to hand the Victorian Order to him on the morning of his hundredth birthday, if Semon did not think it would be too fatiguing for the centenarian to come to Buckingham Palace The King received the maestro like an old friend, shook hands and heartily congratulated him, handing him the insignia of the Victorian Order. The King insisted on his sitting down at once, and chatted pleasantly with him, but he struck a wrong note by asking, "No doubt you are a great Wagnerian?" "No, Your Majesty, not at all!" replied the old gentleman with some heat; "I admit that Wagner has written a few fine things, but they are like oases in a desert and one has to wander a long way to come across them." The King, greatly taken aback, appeasingly answered, "Quite so, quite so," and led the conversation into less controversial paths. Later he laughed heartily

[1] Sir Felix Semon's Diary.

with Semon over his blunder and the indignation of the centenarian Hotspur.

Again, on 3rd June 1904, Semon had made all preparations to perform an unusual operation—second only of its kind—on an extremely nervous lady. The hour of 9 A.M. had been fixed for it. At 8 A.M. the King's valet telephoned to Semon from Buckingham Palace that the King had a sore throat, and wished to see him at 9 A.M. Semon, relying on the King's kindness, ventured to reply that he had a serious operation on hand for a very frightened patient, and was afraid that postponement might have unfavourable influence upon her state of mind: would the King permit him to come a little later? Immediately came the reply that it was understood that Semon must perform the operation and was not to hurry—His Majesty would see him at the Palace any time after the operation. When Semon arrived at Buckingham Palace the King's first question was whether the operation had been successful. On receiving the affirmative, he inquired further into the nature of the affection and concerning the operation. When details had been given he said, "If you think that it would please your patient to hear that I take a great interest in her case, please tell her that, with my best wishes for her speedy and complete recovery." Only after that did he begin to speak of his own affection. During the next few days, his first question always was, "How is your patient?" When Semon told him on the third day that she had got up, he seemed as pleased as if she had been a near relative of his, instead of a Canadian from the farthest North West. Naturally the patient considered it a point of honour to get well as quickly as possible.

He had a strong sense of royal dignity, and though he was susceptible to amusing stories he could not tolerate disrespectful tales of royal personages. The King himself, in spite of his wonderful memory, mother wit, and gift of expression, was not a good raconteur. But he told at least one excellent story. Shortly after the Boer War an English officer, who had been shot through the head, was sent back to England to be trepanned by Sir Frederick Treves. He found that the brain had been most extensively injured and that he would have to remove the greater part. He hardly expected that the patient would recover, but he did, and on leaving the hospital came to the surgeon to thank him. Treves did not conceal his fears that the patient would have

difficulties in his profession, since the greater part of his brain had been removed. "It is very kind of you, Sir Frederick," replied the officer, "to take so much interest in my welfare, but thank God my brain is no longer wanted—I have just been transferred to the War Office." [1]

VII

Balmoral was essentially the King's sporting home, and here he usually invited for a short stay during the season his principal friends, the leading ministers, and the ambassadors. There was thus a constant coming and going at the Scottish castle, and it was considered an exceptional mark of the royal pleasure to be invited for a period exceeding three days. The days were spent in deer-stalking, grouse-driving, and salmon-fishing in the Dee. Almost every day a picnic was arranged at which the Princess of Wales and her older children met the shooters at luncheon. In the evening there would be all sorts of entertainments, from bridge to a big "Gillies' Ball," in which royal hosts and guests joined, and a kinema show, "which was jolly bad," but had the charm of novelty. Among the guests there was a great spirit of camaraderie, which only such taciturn guests as Lord Cromer failed fully to appreciate. Apart from dinners there was no question of rank or station. At dinner music was provided by a "deafening tribe of royal pipers in Highland garb, who, when game was served, solemnly marched three times round the table and made a hellish noise with their bagpipes." [2]

The King was fond of bantering his guests, especially those who, after spending the morning in stalking, returned empty-handed. The game, on account of frequent drives, was in continued and uncertain movement. Soon after his arrival at Balmoral in September 1906 Sir Felix Semon was sent to a part of the forest where all the stags, hinds, and calves of Balmoral had herded. It was impossible to get a shot at a good stag. However, Semon stalked a stag in the heather and shot it—only to find that it was a young stag, less than the minimum admissible weight. All endeavours to get a better stag proved unsuccessful, and Semon returned rather crestfallen Just before dinner the

[1] Sir Felix Semon's private memoirs [2] *Ibid.*

guests were gathered in the usual semicircle awaiting the entrance of the King and Queen. The King came in, and, making straight for Semon, who had discreetly retired to the farthest corner, said in a theatrical whisper which was heard throughout the room, "Chicken butcher!" "Oh, Sire, that is hard," answered Semon, when the laughter had died down. "Not too hard," answered the King; "it is thoroughly merited! how could you shoot such a miserable staggie? Defend yourself!" Semon related his version. "That won't wash," answered the King. "If you were a young lad who had gone out stalking for the first time, I might possibly accept such an excuse. But *you*, who have killed hundreds of stags! Be ashamed of yourself! You will have to hear of this until your life's end." Everybody again laughed. Semon meekly replied, "I hope your Majesty will not be as good as your word." "Won't I?" said the King ironically; "well, you will see!"

The King continued the banter for several days, continually referring to "Sir Felix's babes." A few days later Semon went salmon-fishing, and in spite of a bad season had the good fortune to catch a 15-pounder. When the King held the circle before dinner, he asked Semon, "Well, any luck?" "Yes, your Majesty," answered Semon, "I got a 15-pound salmon." "Really," the King answered; "well, my heartiest congratulations." There came a pause, and then the devastating question, "Did he have horns?" The next day Semon got three fine stags, the only ones that day, which gave a quietus to banter. But just before the drive, at the luncheon-picnic, Prince Eddie, the present Prince of Wales, jumped up and asked Semon, "Have you already killed a little staggie to-day, Sir Felix?" at which there was general laughter. "Who set you on to this, Prince Eddie?" asked Semon. "Grandpapa," came the triumphant reply, which set the laughter going again, the King shaking with mirth the whole time.

VIII

If ever a man deserved the name of "sportsman," in the best sense of that much abused term, King Edward did so. The perfect "sportsman" is the man whose principal pleasure it is to see that the other participators in the sport of the day are

enjoying themselves, the man who can win a great race without undue elation and who can lose without being depressed, who can be cheerful when the birds "go wrong," and, perhaps the most difficult part of all, can be ready with a charming smile and a word of congratulation to the owner whose horse has just beaten his own by a short head in an important race.

All these qualifications King Edward possessed in a superlative degree, and, moreover, he took the right view of sport. Instead of being a slave to it and making a business of it, to him it was always a relaxation, and often a much needed one.

He loved his yacht, not only because she could win races, but because she was his home for the time being, sometimes for weeks together, and because he delighted in the freedom of the sea, the salt breeze, and the beauty of the scene around him

The same may be said of his racing. Like any other man, he could take intense pleasure in seeing a close finish and the victory of his own colours, but he also liked to stroll about the enclosure and bird-cage at Newmarket, to look at the horses, and to talk to his friends . and, above all, he enjoyed the open air. Those who were amongst the tens of thousands present at Epsom when he won his first Derby, as Prince of Wales, with Persimmon, and his first and last, as King, with Minoru, will not readily forget the wild scene of enthusiasm and genuine loyalty that was displayed by the huge crowds on those two occasions. Nor will they forget how an Epsom crowd shouted and cheered on another occasion, namely, when the King sent for the Count Ginistrella, after Signorinetta had won the Oaks, and placed that most sporting of foreigners between himself and the Queen to bow from the royal box his acknowledgement of the ovation that greeted him on the occasion of his mare's dual victory—for she had previously won the Derby. The King's life was made up of graceful acts, but few more graceful than this.

Another aspect of sport which specially appealed to the King was its social and sociable side. As Lord Rosebery said of him, he was "eminently human"; and sport gave him the opportunity of moving freely among his fellow-men in a way which, apart from the excuse that sport afforded, would have been difficult for a reigning monarch. Ascot races, for instance, furnished an occasion for entertaining magnificently at Windsor a number of distinguished foreigners as well as

the representatives of many of the great families of England. Pheasant-shooting and partridge-driving at Sandringham meant, again, large shooting-parties, in which, perhaps, the element of old personal friends was predominant; and at Balmoral King Edward entertained a succession of man-parties, which always included the minister in attendance, and generally a certain number of both active and retired naval and military officers. Perhaps nowhere in the domain of sport did King Edward feel more thoroughly in his element than he did when, seated in the heather and surrounded by his oldest friends, he could breathe the keen Scottish air that he always loved, and enjoy to the full the matchless scenery of the slopes of Lochnagar.

There were four weeks' shooting at Sandringham every year, the principal two being those which included the King's and Queen's birthdays, the 9th November and 1st December. The number of guns was almost invariably from eight to ten. As a shot King Edward was somewhat variable, at times distinctly good, though never approaching the very front rank, in which the Prince of Wales (King George V.), Lord de Grey (later Marquis of Ripon), Lord Walsingham, the Hon. Henry Stonor, and a few others stood in a group by themselves. Although the King was a fairly good shot there were times when, his mind being occupied with important matters, he paid comparatively little attention to the sport which was in progress and let slip many chances, not endeavouring to take them.

A little anecdote may be given as an instance of the King's happy methods. At a shoot at Sandringham, late in the season, the instruction had gone forth that only cocks were to be killed. One of the party was Sir Somerville Gurney, of North Runcton Hall, a frequent guest, for his Majesty constantly invited those who were fortunate enough to be his neighbours to share his sport. Sir Somerville had not understood that hens were to be spared, and one of them coming well over him, he promptly brought it down. It happened that his stand was next to the King, and the bird fell between them. For the King to have said, "We are only shooting cocks now," would perhaps have seemed somewhat in the nature of a reproof; but the King laughingly pointed to the hen and called out, "Ah, Gurney, what a man you are for the ladies!"

One of the King's troubles at Windsor was the abundance of rabbits and the scarcity of partridges: indeed the rabbits thrived so much that they became a nuisance, for they injured the trees, destroyed the shrubs, and their holes were a source of danger to those who rode about the Park. The King discussed with Sir Walter Campbell, the Deputy Ranger of the Park, the possibility of confining the rabbits within certain limits, but on consideration it was perceived that this was scarcely practicable, and the order for their extermination was given. In the year 1904 no fewer than 4285 rabbits were shot at Windsor. In 1906, 2064 figured in the bag, next year there were only 49, and in the last season, 1909–1910, in which 8884 head of game were killed, there were but four. The King was much pleased at the manner in which his instructions had been carried out, and, as a characteristic token of his satisfaction, made Sir Walter Campbell (who occupied Holly Grove, the charming house reserved for the Deputy Ranger) a present of a beautiful antique model in silver of a rabbit sitting up, remarking that "there would be at any rate one rabbit left in the Park."

It was over a rabbit hole that the King tripped and fell while shooting in the Park in the season of 1905. His leg was severely injured, so much so that it was a matter of extreme surprise when he appeared at dinner at the Castle on the same evening. A party had been commanded, however, and in spite of the pain caused by movement, the King would not disappoint his guests. He was unable to walk for a considerable period, and how he was to shoot, for he felt reluctant to abandon his sport, became a problem. It was solved by utilising a low pony-carriage, in which the King had to ride for several weeks. Even then the injured leg was taken out of irons too soon, and it was not until the following February that he was really able to get about again.

Whilst at Marienbad the King once accepted an invitation from the Abbot of Tepl, a great dignitary in the Roman Catholic Church, to a partridge-drive on the Tepl estates, which surround the famous old monastery of that name. The monks owned not only the springs and baths of Marienbad, but also a vast tract of agricultural land, which was farmed by themselves and their tenants. The Marienbad district was famous for its partridges; but driving them was a new form of sport to the monks. However, for so distinguished a guest as King Edward an exception

had to be made, so the Abbot, with the assistance of a travelling Englishman, arranged a partridge-drive on the most approved pattern. The performance began with a Gargantuan luncheon in the refectory of the monastery. On arriving at the butts, which had been beautifully constructed for the occasion, it was evident that the services of the whole population of the neighbourhood for miles round had been called into requisition, not a few of whom, unfortunately for the bag, wandered about at their own sweet will. Partridges there were in plenty; but the intense caution and self-restraint that had to be exercised by the shooters, in order to avoid hitting either a flanker or one of the wandering spectators, resulted in a remarkably small bag. However, it was all excellent fun, and no one was more amused at the incongruity of the whole *chasse* than the King himself.[1]

IX

The King's principal recreation, however, was racing, a sport of which he never grew tired. He had had a wonderful record as an owner while Prince of Wales, and there were hopes that he would repeat his previous record of winning the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, the St. Leger, the Eclipse Stakes, and the Grand National in the same year, as he did in 1900. But for the first seven years of his reign the King had but little success on the Turf. During 1901 his colours did not appear at all. Owing to Queen Victoria's death the King's horses were leased to his old friend, the Duke of Devonshire, who experienced an unlucky year. In 1902 the King had seventeen horses in training, but only two won important races. 1903 and 1904 were equally disappointing years.

Prior to 1904 the King had never had as many as twenty horses in training: but with this number he started the year, destined to be another disappointing one, for only a couple of the number were successful, and these, too, in events of small note. Mead came second in the Dullingham Plate at Newmarket, and Carstone dead-heated with his solitary opponent in the Liverpool Welter Plate. 1905 was also an unlucky year. Chatsworth was unfit and could not run for the Cup—but the King showed his typical sportsmanship when he wrote to Lady Londonderry on

[1] *King Edward as a Sportsman*, Hon. Seymour Fortescue's Introduction.

3rd September 1905. "I deeply regret that Chatsworth could not run for the Cup, but am very glad that Lord Derby's His Majesty carried it off."

The King never thought of laying the blame for his lack of success on his trainer, Richard Marsh On the contrary it was the King's kindly habit to express regret that the horses sent up from Sandringham were so inferior. On paying one of his periodical visits to Egerton House, where his horses were trained, he desired to be taken to Marsh's study, and remarked to him, "We have a number of very bad horses, Marsh" Marsh mournfully admitted the undeniable truth, expressing regrets which were assuredly fervent. "I consider it my duty, as your first master," the King continued, "to get rid of these animals in order to save your reputation of trainer," and soon afterwards some of the horses were sold and half a dozen colts were leased in 1906 from Colonel Hall Walker (later Lord Wavertree) The six were La La, Moorcock, Calderstone, Oakmere, Prince Pippin, and Minoru.

Marsh, who had longed intensely for some really good horses, was not particularly pleased with the newcomers, but expressed a decided preference for Minoru. This colt seemed not unlikely to win races of moderate class, though there was little about him to suggest the probability of his doing much, and it was rather in the nature of a surprise when, making his appearance, in the Great Surrey Foal Stakes, he won by a couple of lengths from a dozen others. Going on to Ascot he ran second for the Coventry Stakes, and was second again, beaten only by a neck, for the July Stakes But a few weeks afterwards, as Minoru was crossing the Cambridge Road near the turnpike, he slipped on the tan with which the road was covered His fore-legs went one way, his hind-legs the other, and "he almost split himself in two." This, doubtless, went far to account for his defeats during the rest of the year.

The year 1907 opened with the unprecedented number of six-and-twenty horses in training, including Cynosure, of whom the King wrote to Lady Londonderry (August 20, 1907):

I am running Cynosure at Stockton on Thursday and if he would only try he ought to win the race My visits to Wilhelmshohe and Ischl went off admirably, and I trust that good political results may accrue from them. . . . I take the cure very strictly and keep early hours.

The year 1908 recorded a series of victories by Princesse de Galles, with other wins by Slim Lad and Marie Legraye. But the great question earlier in the year was what Perrier could do, and his easy victory in Newmarket Biennial at the Craven Meeting brightened the aspect of things enormously. It was believed with no little confidence that here was another classic winner, and he started a strong favourite at little more than even money for the Two Thousand Guineas ; in which, however, he could get no nearer than fifth, beaten many lengths. Prior to this he had been backed for the Derby at a price which lengthened greatly as the day of the Epsom race approached. The King thought that Perrier might win, and he remembered that on the two previous occasions when he had won the Derby one of Lord Carrington's daughters had sat by his side. He now tested the charm again, but the spell was broken and the King's horse Perrier was hopelessly beaten. A rank outsider, Signorinetta, belonging to Count Ginistrella, a hundred to one chance, won, and the result was received in grim silence.[1] It was not until the King himself congratulated the winning owner that the silence gave place to tumultuous cheering.

But 1909 was the *annus mirabilis*. When the year opened it seemed not unlikely that Princesse de Galles would win notable stakes. There was also a possibility that the hopes which had been formed with regard to Perrier would be to some extent fulfilled. The string now consisted of twenty-three : Slim Lad, Perrier, Marie Legraye, Saint's Mead, Perdona, Princesse de Galles, Prim Nun, Royal Escort, Vain Air, Slim Lady, Perla, Persicaria, Permia, Flaming Vixen, Damia, Orellius, Border Prince, La La, Moorcock, Calderstone, Oakmere, Prince Pippin, and Minoru.

In February Vain Air won the Molyneux Stakes at Liverpool, and early in March the Sudbury Plate at Derby. Minoru won his second race, and Oakmere won the Berkshire Three Year Old Handicap, both at Newbury early in March, so that the season started well. The King was pleased and wrote to Lady Londonderry from Biarritz (March 3, 1909) :

Thanks for congratulations on winning a race with Vain Air at Liverpool last week. She won again at Derby yesterday, and

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary, March 27, 1902.

with Minoru and Oakmere I won good races at Newbury, so that I have begun the season well, and I hope Marsh now sees that it is better to run the horses instead of keeping them always shut up in their stables . . . I have been here nearly four weeks and it has done no end of good, as I felt very run down when I came here. We have had some stormy days but the climate is splendid and most healthy, and we are now having some springlike weather.

Victories followed quickly, the Princesse de Galles, Saint's Mead, Perrier, and Moorcock being successful at Epsom, Ascot, Newmarket, and Windsor respectively, but the rising hope was Minoru. After the Greenham Stakes she surprisingly captured the Two Thousand Guineas—a four to one winner. The race intensified the hope that the King's filly, Princesse de Galles, who was to make her first appearance of the season in the One Thousand Guineas, would gain a corresponding success, which, to the general disappointment, she just failed to accomplish.

Minoru happily continued to give satisfaction Fit as he had been at Newbury, his trainer had skilfully left something to work on, and for a time he was favourite for the greatest of races—the Derby.

The King now took the greatest interest in Minoru's welfare. It was his wish to be kept informed every day of the colt's progress, and Richard Marsh, the King's trainer, was able to make a satisfactory report every day. Hope grew as Epsom drew near, and not even the reports of much improvement in the rival Bayardo dismayed the King. But danger was believed to have arisen from another quarter. Mr. Louis Winans' American-bred colt, Sir Martin, had won as a two-year-old some of the principal races in the United States, and seemed likely to prove a successful rival. Prior to the Derby he had only run once, in a Welter Handicap at Newmarket, which he had won with considerable ease against a poor field. Nevertheless he was so highly esteemed that on the day of the Derby he made his way to absolute favouritism, though only preferred to Minoru by a fraction.

Derby day dawned auspiciously. The usual Derby crowd was augmented by many visitors eager to be present in case, for the first time in racing history, the reigning sovereign should win the Derby, which it seemed probable that he might do.

The King and Queen were present, with the Prince and Princess of Wales, and certainly there was reason to be proud of the royal colt as the field of fifteen paraded past the stands. The best of good wishes were showered on the King, but he had seen too much of the "glorious uncertainty" of the Turf to be sanguine, and replied, "Marsh thinks he will win," in answer to the expression of his friends' aspirations.

Minoru was drawn on the inside, which was not exactly the best place. Herbert Jones, the King's jockey, however, was smartly away, and rode the horse in the first three or four furlongs most judiciously. At the mile post he had got his mount going well, and had taken a good position a length or more behind the one or two who were forcing the pace—just where his jockey wished him, with Sir Martin hot at his heels. But now a disaster happened to the American colt. Sir Martin either crossed his legs or struck another horse—precisely what did happen has never been clearly stated—at any rate he fell, and some of those who were behind him necessarily suffered, possibly Bayardo. Most fortunately Minoru escaped, having been a little in front at the time. At Tattenham Corner the purple, scarlet, and gold jacket was prominent, the colt being next to the rails, with Louviers in close attendance, Lord Michelham's William the Fourth on the latter's outside, and Lord Carnarvon's Valens near. But Minoru was galloping with unflagging vigour, and his long striding action was bound to tell coming up the straight. And so indeed it did. The pace was a cracker. Keeping Minoru perfectly balanced Jones brought him sweepingly along, neck and neck with Louviers. The familiar outbursts of enthusiasm began to well forth while yet the leaders were nearly a furlong from home, more cautious spirits trusting that it was not premature; for it was obvious that the fight must be a desperate one. Jones, well placed on the rails, strove with all his strength and skill; Stern, who had come over from France to ride Louviers, responded with equal energy. The two came to tackle the last furlong with grim determination. Neck and neck they raced—together they seemed to shoot past the winning post, in the midst of a great roar, partly because the people thought the King's horse had won, and partly out of sheer excitement. No one but the judge could say what had been the result. For an agonising second or two there was a cruel suspense, an awful pause. Then, to the

general joy, the hoisting of the numbers proclaimed a royal victory by a short head. The enthusiasm was even greater than over Persimmon's famous victory of 1896 Cheering such as had never been heard before broke out. It may have been just as wonderful when Persimmon or Diamond Jubilee won, but this seemed to surpass all that had gone before.

The King obeyed the tradition in going down to meet his horse, making his way as best he could, with such escort as the police were able to afford, through the dense mass of humanity. But the police with their ropes were swept away in their attempt to keep back the seething, cheering crowd, who patted the King on the back and shook hands with him, with cries of "Good old Teddie." Peer and commoner, punter and bookie, jostled one another to get near the King. Everything, including the horses who were second and third, was forgotten in the delirious excitement of the royal victory Even policemen were waving their helmets and cheering themselves hoarse Nothing like it could have happened outside England. From the royal box Queen Alexandra, visibly touched by the tumultuous enthusiasm, looked down on the surging crowd in the middle of which was the King of England. At last the King reached the gate of the little enclosure and awaited the moment when he could be handed the rein and lead in his third Derby winner.

Almost in vain did the King's trainer, Richard Marsh, try to force his way through to the horse, until at last by dint of much shouting and elbowing he compelled the crowd to let him through Only then did he get to Minoru's head and some progress could be made to the spot where the King was standing

The King looked enormously pleased, though the excitement seemed to be almost too much for him. When he took the leading rein in his hand the roars of cheering broke out afresh. It was with difficulty that a path for the horses could be cleared, As the King was leading his champion through the frantically cheering crowd some music-hall singer struck up "God save the King," which was taken up in all the enclosures and sung right down the course and away up the hill till it swelled to a mighty tumultuous chorus. To more than one of his friends the King afterwards declared that the heartfelt enthusiasm of his people was before all else what had made him happy in that day of excitement and triumph.

It was hoped that the King would add to his racing success by winning the Oaks with the Princesse de Galles. When the barrier was raised for the fillies' race, it was seen that the favourite Electra was left hopelessly at the post. A dangerous rival—the most dangerous of all indeed, as it appeared—was removed from the path of Princesse de Galles. There seemed nothing but Perola to beat. The royal filly looked quite likely to win, but she could not resist the challenge of Perola, and was second, as she had been at Newmarket a month before. The King had repeated his succession of 1900—winning the Derby and coming second for the Oaks again.

For years the King had honoured the Duke of Richmond with his presence at Goodwood House for the great Sussex meeting, and he was there as usual in 1909. Minoru had things all his own way in the Sussex Stakes. The defeats of Prim Nun and Moorcock, the only other two of his Majesty's horses to appear, were unimportant. Whether Minoru could win the St. Leger was now the point which chiefly occupied attention, for Mr. Fairie's Bayardo had found his form, and could not be recognised as other than a most dangerous rival. Marsh, however, was fairly confident that the Derby winner would carry off the last of the classics, and in the paddock at Doncaster, before the race, was almost vexed with his friends who could not abandon their preference for Bayardo. That preference was justified, and for the first time as a three-year-old His Majesty's colt encountered defeat, and a heavy defeat too, being fourth.

The running was considered inexplicable. That Bayardo might have beaten Minoru had indeed been not unlikely; but it seemed utterly wrong for the King's colt to be behind Valens and Mirador. Carrousel led round the bend, and Jones appeared to imagine that when this colt was beaten, as he was sure to be, a place would be open for Minoru. As Jones tried to come up on the rails, however, Carrousel's jockey prevented him, and this brought the King's colt on to his knees. Recovering him, Jones tried for another opening, but now Bayardo got in his way. Minoru was a long-striding horse who would not stand being pulled about; the consequence was he began to sprawl, and was not really galloping at the finish.

He was to appear once more, in the Free Handicap Sweepstakes at the Newmarket Houghton Meeting, where Maher was

commanded to ride him. It was a most exciting struggle. A hundred yards from home the three leaders were in a line, and it was by a brilliant effort of jockeyship that Maher brought Minoru to the front. The King, with his habitual kindness, proceeded to the paddock and spoke a few words of gracious congratulation to Maher the victorious as he emerged from the weighing-room.

Minoru had gone far to make up for past misfortunes, and had placed the King second in the list of winning owners; indeed, until after Ascot he had been at the top of the list, Bayardo's Eclipse Stakes altering the order. Princesse de Galles did not add to her solitary contribution—fortunately a handsome one.[1]

X

The season which was to bring the King's career to an end with such tragic suddenness (1910) opened with twenty-two horses in training. The King was away when the season opened, and indeed there would have been little for him to see had he remained in England, though as the spring advanced Marsh had gradually become more and more pleased with some of the two-year-olds. Attention was chiefly concentrated on Minoru. Lacking engagements, the colt had been entered for the City and Suburban and allotted 8st. 11lb, a heavy weight, but then Minoru had won the Derby. He throve in his training so well that he came to a short price in the betting, starting first favourite at 3 to 1. His performance was extremely disappointing, but an explanation of it seemed presently to be forthcoming. Minoru

[1] The full list of the King's winners for 1909 was as follows.

Minoru, Greenham Stakes, Newbury	£879
,, Two Thousand Guineas	5000
,, The Derby	6450
,, St. James's Palace Stakes, Ascot	1950
,, Surrey Stakes, Goodwood	617
,, Free Handicap, Newmarket	350
Saint's Mead, North Park Plate, Epsom	187
Princess de Galles, Coronation Stakes, Ascot	3050
Vain Air, Molyneux Stakes, Liverpool	400
,, Sudbury Plate, Derby	177
Perrier, Newmarket Biennial	546
Moorcock, Manor Plate, Windsor	100
Oakmere, Berkshire Three-Year-Old Handicap, Newbury	438
	£20,144

was suffering from some affection of the eyes. He appeared to be in pain, and, this having been ascertained, his defeat cannot be put against his credit.

To the end the King's horses afforded him deep gratification. On the day of his death he heard with pleasure the victory of Witch of the Air, half sister to Vain Air, in the Spring Two-year-old Plate at Kempton Park.

The King had the experience, which falls to the lot of few horse owners, of finding them remunerative. He had headed the list of winning owners in 1900, having been twice second, in 1896 and 1897, as he was a third time in 1909. Some of his sales, too, were fortunate, Diamond Jubilee, for instance, brought him £20,000. When Lord Marcus Beresford was entrusted with the management, the King handed him a cheque for £1000 to open an account with Messrs. Weatherby. The royal owner was never called upon for another shilling, and drew large sums on several occasions. At one time close on £60,000 was standing to his credit.[1] There can be little doubt that some of his happiest hours were due to his patronage of the national sport, and this in a great measure because it brought him so closely into contact with his people.

[1] *King Edward VII. as a Sportsman.*

vying in population and industry with the greatest commercial centres of Europe. Since he had left American shores in 1860 America had emerged from the throes of her Civil War to become one of the foremost manufacturing nations of the world. Of this new America King Edward had little cognisance. Europe he knew like a book; with almost every crowned head and prominent statesman he was personally acquainted, and he could accurately gauge their influence, their processes of thought, their probable action in a given emergency. But at no time during his reign did he journey outside the confines of Europe or the Mediterranean Sea. Thus his knowledge of the Dominions and of America was limited to the facts that could be gleaned from personal intercourse with their representatives, from diplomatic missives, and from the columns of the press. It is perhaps too much to expect of any man that he make, like Dr. Whewell, " omniscience his foible," but the King did what he could to remedy his ignorance of the modern America by direct conversation and communication with Americans of eminence. With successive Presidents of the United States, from Mr. Buchanan onwards, he was on generally cordial terms, despite the occasional friction between the two countries. American citizens, their wives and daughters, whom he met at home and abroad, discovered in him " a grand man," and as a rule he went out of his way to be civil even to the most obtrusive of them. His excessive good-nature led him to overlook their little solecisms of speech and eccentricities of manner, and he appreciated their frankness, although it occasionally verged upon gaucherie. While he thus welcomed the average American tourist with a cheerful toleration, he was a genuine admirer of the more cultured American man or woman, and he numbered several of them in his circle, especially those American ladies, such as the Duchess of Marlborough and Lady Granard, who had married into the peerage. Among his American men friends may be particularly noted two of the most interesting figures in modern American history, viz. Mr. Whitelaw Reid and Mr. Theodore Roosevelt. The first of these, a man of great wealth and of polished manners, had been the special American plenipotentiary at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. King Edward as Prince of Wales had then accepted an invitation to dine with Mr. Reid, and a pleasant acquaintanceship had sprung up between the two men. After

that meeting Sir Francis Knollys (as Lord Knollys then was) wrote on the Prince's behalf to Mr. Hay, the American Ambassador in London, to tell him that "it would have been difficult for the President to have sent to London for the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee a more acceptable representative of the United States than Mr Whitelaw Reid, who has impressed the Prince of Wales, as well as all those who have been brought into contact with him, by the charm of his manner and by his agreeable qualities." [1]

In June 1902 Mr. Whitelaw Reid came again to England: this time as the special American representative for the Coronation, and he brought with him a picture of George Washington in Masonic regalia, by the American artist Robert Gordon Hardy, as America's Coronation gift. The King was delighted with the present, and even more delighted with the choice of Mr Reid as the American envoy; but the King's illness and Mr. Reid's unavoidable return to America before the King's recovery precluded much intercourse between the two.

Their acquaintance, however, soon ripened into friendship when, in 1905, Mr. Reid again returned to London, this time as the American Ambassador, and from that year until the King's death their relations grew ever more cordial. The correspondence between the two during that period, though scarcely of sufficient general interest for publication, is one constant stream of invitations and counter-invitations, most of which were accepted, and the King and the American Ambassador met frequently at Dorchester House (Whitelaw Reid's palatial residence) and at the King's residences, besides meeting in the less formal atmosphere of country houses where they were both guests. In their conversations the many points where Anglo-American interests coincided or conflicted were discussed at length, and the King gained from the suave and cultured American a real appreciation of the American point of view. Reid for his part was deeply impressed by King Edward's character and ability and sent to Washington graphic accounts of his royal host and guest. "The more you know of him," he wrote to President Roosevelt early in 1907, "the better I am sure you will like him, and the more you will come to the prevalent English, and in fact European

[1] Quoted in *The Times*, 4th May 1921. Article on Mr. Royal Cortissoz's *Life of Whitelaw Reid.*

belief, that he is the greatest mainstay of peace in Europe. . . ." Alluding to some criticism the King had passed upon a recent speech by one of the leading peers, Reid wrote to the President: "Nobody ever ventures to repeat remarks like this in London, but, nevertheless, the spirit of them oozes out imperceptibly, and has an extraordinary effect on the opinion of society."[1]

It was a great surprise for the King when, in March 1909, the American government decided to recall Mr. Whitelaw Reid, and he at once urged Sir Edward Grey to represent to America the increased cordiality of Anglo-American relations since Mr. Whitelaw Reid had been Ambassador and the desirability of retaining him in that capacity. Sir Edward Grey, through Mr. James Bryce, the British Ambassador in Washington, did all that was possible in favour of a prolongation of Mr. Reid's term of office, but when it was learnt that the American government wished to give places to other supporters of theirs, and that they considered that Reid had "had his turn,"[2] the King wisely refrained from pressing the matter. Nevertheless his representations had effect, for in the following December Mr. Secretary Knox cabled for the President (Mr. Taft) to Mr. Reid that there was no thought of a change at the London Embassy, and that his tenure of office was therefore indefinite. The news was warmly welcomed by the King, who wrote immediately from Milton Abbey (Dec. 10):

DEAR MR. WHITELAW REID—I rejoice to learn that your tenure of office as Ambassador of the United States to the Court of St. James's is likely to continue. There is no one who could fill such a post with greater distinction than yourself, and I personally rejoice that one whom I have learned to know as a friend will not now leave my country.—Believe me, very sincerely yours, EDWARD R.

From 1905 to 1910 the friendship between the two men grew even more cordial. The last time they met was the Tuesday before the King's death, when the King sent for Mr. Reid in order to talk over with him an event to which he was looking forward with no little keenness—the projected visit of Mr. Theodore Roosevelt to England.

[1] Quoted in *The Times*, 4th May 1921.
[2] Hardinge to the King, 7th April 1909.

II

By far the most dominant figure on the American stage during King Edward's reign was Mr Whitelaw Reid's friend, Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, the energetic ex-Colonel of the "Rough Riders" who in 1901 was elected President of the United States, a position to which he was reappointed in November 1904. This independent, courageous, and impulsive New Yorker had been a violent Anglophobe in his younger days, and for the first few years of his Presidency there was little indication that he had altered his opinion. In 1904, however, on the occasion of his re-election, the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Mortimer Durand, a diplomat who had seen varied service in India, Afghanistan, Persia, and Spain, was anxious that King Edward should follow the precedent set by the German and Austrian Emperors and by President Loubet, and send Mr. Roosevelt a message of congratulation on his accession to the presidential chair. The King willingly assented, but the British Foreign Office deprecated any such action, as "official congratulations might be construed as an interference with American party politics."[1] The King now thought of the happier solution of desiring that the British Ambassador should ask for an interview with the newly-elected President in order to convey to him the King's personal congratulations, but when Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, who was on intimate terms with Roosevelt, and had recently returned from a visit to America, pointed to a precedent in President Cleveland's correspondence with Queen Victoria, the King decided to write to the President and drafted a friendly letter of congratulation on the occasion of the President's inauguration. He took much trouble with the composition, and although he welcomed the hints which Spring-Rice and Lord Lansdowne supplied, the letter which was sent on 20th February 1905 followed in its main outline a scheme of his own. The King's original draft ran.

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DEAR MR. ROOSEVELT—Lord Lansdowne tells me that it is not in accordance with precedent that I should send you formal official congratulations on your second inauguration. At the same time I cannot refrain from sending a personal Godspeed to

[1] Telegram from Foreign Office to Sir M. Durand, 14th November 1904.

the elected chief of the republican branch of the English-speaking people.

You know what my parents personally did to prevent the horrible calamity of a war between our peoples. It is my dearest wish to do all in my power to promote a cordial understanding between them, based not on treaties and conventions but on mutual sympathy and co-operation in the realisation of those principles which are our common inheritance. You have shown both in word and deed what is your conception of those principles.

I know that it is impossible that I should welcome you on this side of the Atlantic during the term of your office. Were it possible, you should see what a reception would be given to the President of the U.S. by the King of Great Britain and Ireland and by his people. I hope some day to make your personal acquaintance and that of Mrs. Roosevelt. I hope you will convey my good wishes to your sister.

I am sending you the miniature of a great Englishman who was once a landowner in your country. I hope you will keep it as a souvenir of your sincere well-wisher.

I am sending you the Queen's *Journal of her Life in the Highlands*, and I hope you will send me in exchange a copy of one of your works in order that it may be preserved in my library at Windsor.

The draft which was eventually approved contained many minor modifications, and it lacks the happy spontaneity of the first draft, but it will be seen that it follows closely the King's original effort:

Dear Mr. President—Although I have never had the pleasure of knowing you personally, I am anxious to avail myself of the opportunity which your inauguration as President affords, in order to offer you an assurance of my sincere goodwill and my warm personal congratulations on this notable occasion.

You, Mr. President, and I have been called upon to superintend the destinies of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, and this fact should in my opinion alone suffice to bring us together.

It has indeed often seemed strange to me that, being as I am on intimate terms with the rulers of Europe, I should not be in closer touch with the President of the United States. It would be agreeable to me and I think advantageous to both countries that this state of things should in future cease to exist.

As a slight indication of the feelings which I have endeavoured to express, it gives me great pleasure to ask your acceptance of the miniature of a great Englishman—Hampden—who was once

a landowner in your own country. I do so in memory of the old country and as a mark of my esteem and regard for yourself.

The Cruiser Squadron of the Atlantic Fleet, commanded by my nephew, Prince Louis of Battenberg, will visit my North American Colonies this summer, and I shall have much gratification in sending it in the autumn to some of the most important ports in your country. I have but little doubt that the British Squadron will receive the same cordial welcome which your country always shows towards mine.

I sincerely hope that Mrs Roosevelt and the members of your family are in the best of health, and begging you to bring me to the remembrance of your sister, Mrs. Cowles, whom I have the pleasure of knowing, believe me, dear Mr. President, very truly yours,

EDWARD R.

Why the King decided to send the Hampden miniature to the President was explained several years later. The day after King Edward's death Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, afterwards British Ambassador at Washington, wrote to Mr. Roosevelt :

I think I ought to tell you something about our King who died last night. When I came back from seeing you in Washington after you were President he sent for me and talked a long time about you. I told him what I thought you stood for, quite frankly and fully, though, if popular impressions at that time had been quite justified, he would not have sympathised much with what I told him. But he did listen very sympathetically. He said he wanted to get into personal relations with you, not as King and President so much as two men with certain aims in common. He mentioned what his father had done on his deathbed for good relations, and wished to do something himself.

He told me he intended to write to you himself, and his first intention was to send quite an informal letter. He also wanted to send you some quite unofficial memento, and asked me what I thought you would like as a personal sign of goodwill—not as a formal presentation. I thought of something I had seen in his collection which was of great historical value—but not the sort of thing a King of England might be expected to give to an American President, because it was the picture of a man who had led a successful rebellion against the English Crown. But that was the reason he jumped at the idea at once because, as he said, you were a man who could understand why he like you (and you like himself) should join in admiration of a great Englishman. . . .[1]

[1] Published in *Scribner's Magazine*, April 1920.

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The King entrusted the letter and the miniature to Sir Mortimer Durand, but at the same time he asked Mr. Henry White, the Secretary of the American Embassy in London, who was visiting America, to carry very cordial messages to the President, emphasising the desirability of "a constantly growing friendship and understanding between the English-speaking peoples."

The President was visibly touched by the action on the part of a sovereign he had never met. He asked Sir M. Durand "to tender his cordial thanks especially for the warm and friendly tone of the letter, which he said was different in that respect from any letter which he had ever received from a reigning sovereign." But the miniature occasioned some difficulty. Roosevelt valued it highly and thought it a singularly appropriate gift, but, as Sir M. Durand explained, "it is very important in the present state of his relations with the Senate that nothing should be said about it unless he mentions it himself," as he was legally incapable of receiving it without the sanction of Congress, "which might be refused."[1] None the less, Roosevelt told all his intimates about the gift, and six days later wrote to the King:

MY DEAR KING EDWARD—On the eve of the inauguration Sir Mortimer handed me Your Majesty's very kind letter and the miniature of Hampden, than which I could have appreciated nothing more. White, who will hand you this, has repeated to me your conversation with him. Through him I have ventured to send you some studies of mine in our western history.

I absolutely agree with you as to the importance, not merely to ourselves but to all the free peoples of the civilised world, of a constantly growing friendship and understanding between the English-speaking peoples. One of the gratifying things in what has occurred during the last decade has been the growth in this feeling of goodwill. All I can do to foster it will be done. I need hardly add that, in order to foster it, we need judgement and moderation no less than the goodwill itself. The larger interests of the two nations are the same; and the fundamental underlying traits of their characters are also the same. Over here, our gravest problems are those affecting us within. In matters outside our own borders we are chiefly concerned, first with what goes on south of us, second with affairs in the orient; and in both cases our interests are identical with yours.

It seems to me that if Russia had been wise she would have

[1] Sir M. Durand to Lord Lansdowne, 3rd March 1905.

made peace before the Japanese took Moukden. If she waits until they are north of Harbin the terms will certainly be worse for her. I had this view unofficially conveyed to the Russian Government some weeks ago; and I think it would have been to their interest if they had then acted upon it.

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With hearty thanks for your cordial courtesy, believe me, very sincerely yours, THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

The King at once telegraphed in reply (March 23):

Most grateful for charming letter just received, and accept your book *The Winning of the West* with the greatest pleasure and interest.

Roosevelt in his reply had touched upon the Russo-Japanese conflict, which was then nearing its end. As early as January 1905 he had been privately and unofficially advising Russia to make peace, and now in his remarks to the King he was hopeful of bringing the British government to use pressure with Japan. At the same time he was urging the Kaiser, "that jumpy creature," as he described him, to use his influence with the Tsar. His pacific aspirations had effect, and when the belligerents eventually came to thrash matters out over the council table, it was Mr. Roosevelt who acted as mediator between them.[1]

In the following August the King took the opportunity of the visit of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace to America to send President Roosevelt another informal friendly message. The President, as Wallace wrote to Lord Knollys on 9th August,

was all attention, and he listened with evident satisfaction as I related to him how I had had the honour of being received by the King the day before my departure from England, and how his Majesty had instructed me to tell the President that he had watched with the keenest interest and sympathy his benevolent efforts in the cause of peace. In these efforts his Majesty wished him the most complete success. I added that, in the subsequent course of conversation, the King had impressed on me his desire and hope that the thoroughly friendly relations existing between the two great Anglo-Saxon nations should always continue, not only in consideration of their common origin, but also in view of their innumerable common interests.

After a moment's pause the President, with an unmistakable expression of satisfaction, said: "I need hardly say that I heartily reciprocate. The two great English-speaking peoples, though not

[1] See p. 307 *supra*

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composed of absolutely identical elements, have a great deal in common, and they are certainly more like to each other than to any other nation. This comes out in their good and in their bad qualities. When I happen to read, for example, about your War Office difficulties, I have the satisfaction of thinking that I am not the only person in the world who has to struggle with the difficulties of popular government. Both King Edward and myself have to teach our democracies to face the rest of the world. At the time of my inauguration I received a great many presents, and the one which gave me perhaps the greatest pleasure was a beautiful miniature of Hampden sent me by King Edward. What charmed and touched me most was not so much the exquisite workmanship as the choice of the subject. I appreciate *that* more than I can say "—here his voice softened—" and I hope you will tell his Majesty so. If there was a present which touched me even more, it was the one I received from John Hay—an opal ring with a lock of Abraham Lincoln's hair."

III

A few months later President Roosevelt sought to strengthen the ties of amity between himself and King Edward by sending him another one of his works. Mr. Roosevelt forwarded the book early in December to Mr. Whitelaw Reid, the American Ambassador in London.

"Tell His Majesty for me," wrote the President to Mr. Reid on 6th November, "that I am violating a rule made by one of my uncles, who was also in his time a sportsman and writer, and who once remarked to me that although he had done a good many mean things in the course of his life, he had never yet asked any one to read one of his books. However, add that I do not expect the King to read the book—merely to receive it."

The Ambassador suggested to Lord Knollys that he should deliver the book to the King in person, a suggestion which the King welcomed, but the sudden change of government in England and the King's accident [1] unfortunately precluded any such action, and the Ambassador's absence in America for the ensuing month led him to ask Lord Knollys to give the present to the King on his behalf, at the same time enclosing President Roosevelt's letter to himself.

[1] See p. 415 *supra*.

Thus, in spite of the best of intentions, it was not until the middle of December that King Edward received the President's book.

A month later (Jan. 23, 1906) the King sent by the hand of a very old friend of his, Colonel Count Gleichen (later Lord Edward Gleichen), who was also his cousin, a very friendly letter to the President. In the previous autumn the Cruiser Squadron of the British Atlantic Fleet, under the command of the King's nephew-in-law, Rear-Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg,[1] on the cruise mentioned by the King in his letter of 20th February 1905, visited New York and other American ports. Mr. Roosevelt gave Prince Louis a royal reception—to King Edward's gratification. Writing to the President on 23rd January 1906, on the occasion of Count Gleichen's taking up the post of British Military Attaché in Washington, the King referred to the Prince's reception in the following terms .

Dear Mr. Roosevelt—As Lieutenant-Colonel Count Gleichen is leaving for the United States in order to take up his appointment as Military Attaché to my Embassy at Washington, I gladly take this opportunity of writing you a few lines to recommend him to your notice.

He is a cousin of mine—as his father was nephew to my beloved mother Queen Victoria—and served many years in the army. Gleichen has seen much service both in Egypt and South Africa, and has held important posts, his last being Military Attaché at Berlin.

These lines will I trust find you and all the members of your family in the best of health—and I gladly avail myself of this opportunity of sending my congratulations on the occasion of your daughter's approaching marriage.

I saw Prince Louis of Battenberg last week and heard from him of the great personal kindness he received from you—and how gratified he and the Fleet under his command had been by the splendid and cordial reception which they had met with at the hands of your people !

Trusting that this year may be one of peace and prosperity to all nations and especially to our two countries, believe me, dear Mr. President, very truly yours,

Edward R. & I.

Count Gleichen delivered the missive personally, and in an

[1] He had married in 1884 his cousin, Princess Victoria of Hesse, the grand-daughter of Queen Victoria.

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interesting letter to the King, dated 8th February, described his reception :

Mr. Roosevelt was extremely friendly, and talked to me for some time, though there were crowds of people waiting to see him. He kept the subject almost entirely to soldiering, described his Rough Riders and how he "ran" them, asked about my experiences in South Africa, etc. etc. He gave me the impression of being a very busy and determined man, with common-sense ideas very much up-to-date, and a powerful will of his own: rather the same type of man, in a way, as the Emperor, but more open-minded and much less self-centred. He talks fast, with a very strong Yankee accent, and has a curious way of showing all his teeth every other word, which gives him half a grinning, half a savage expression. . . .

Three weeks later (Feb. 28, 1906) the President replied to the King :

My dear King Edward—Your kind letter has just been handed me by Count Gleichen. It was a pleasure to meet him; he is evidently thoroughly well up in his work; I shall talk with him freely.

Permit me to thank you especially for your most thoughtful and friendly remembrance of my daughter's wedding. Longworth is a good fellow, one of the younger men who have done really well in Congress; he was from my own college, Harvard, and there belonged to my club, the Porcellian, which is antique as antiquity goes in America, for it was founded in Colonial days; he was on the "Varsity crew," and was, and is, the best violinist who ever came from Harvard.

Have you seen Togo's address to his fleet when it was disbanded? It was so good that I put it in general orders for the army and navy. I enclose you a copy.

The other day I read Ian Hamilton's book on his campaigning with Kuroki. It is the best book I have seen on the Russo-Japanese war. He stops, however, before he gets to the really big fighting; I suppose there is some red tape in the Department about his going on with it; I heartily wish that your Majesty would look over the volume that is out, and, if you like it, direct Hamilton to go on with the work and finish the account of the entire campaign; it would be a real service.

May I ask that you present my most respectful homage to Her Majesty? Again thanking you, believe me, sir, with great regard, very sincerely yours, Theodore Roosevelt.

P.S.—I shall send Choate to head our delegation to the Hague

Conference, its members will work in absolute accord with your delegation. My brother-in-law is an admiral, by the way[1]

In the following months President Roosevelt, who by now had abated much of his Anglophobism of his earlier years, used his growing European influence to smooth over what threatened to be a European conflagration over Morocco,[2] and his part in bringing the Kaiser to see the necessity for a peaceful solution of the difficulties won the King's warm approval.

IV

The friendship that was now growing between the two heads of the English-speaking peoples was about to issue in practical proposals for the limitation of armaments On 31st August Count Gleichen had another interview with the President, and the following day wrote fully to the King.

SIRE—I had luncheon with the President yesterday, at Oyster Bay (on Long Island) Just before going in to luncheon he took me aside and said: "As I understand you will be going back to England soon, I hope you will tell the King from me how deeply sensible I am of his courtesy to me, and more especially that I am very grateful to him for the courtesy shown to my daughter." Then he went off at a tangent and said. "I think it would be a very good idea to limit the size of battleships. I don't see why it shouldn't be discussed at the Hague Conference—if no nation were allowed to build a bigger ship than the *Dreadnought* it would limit the increasing naval expenses of all countries and be much more useful than trying to limit the size of armies, which is of course ridiculous. I wish you would put it before your Government and see what they think of it. You may tell them that I intend to back up England to the utmost in the Hague Conference—I daresay Germany won't expect it and I know she won't like it—but I'm going to do so all the same. Another thing, tell Lord Grey and Haldane" (he meant of course Sir Edward Grey) "not to let themselves be carried away by sentimental ideas at the Hague Conference. Wars are not to be conducted on sentimental principles, and I'm afraid, from what I see and hear, they may let themselves be swayed by their party in that direction, against their own convictions—but don't let them do it." He repeated this sentiment afterwards at luncheon, before several other people (all Americans).

[1] Published in *Scribner's Magazine*, April 1920.
[2] See p. 362 *supra*.

It seemed to me rather an unconventional way of delivering a message to another Government, but I give his words as closely as I can remember: and am sending in an official dispatch on the subject to Sir Mortimer.

It was quite an interesting little experience, the luncheon-party. His house is a small unpretentious country house, and the only sign of his position is a detective on the carriage drive. He did not even send to meet one at the station, 3 miles off. The luncheon by the way was extremely meagre, and I got up quite hungry. . . .

The President was in excellent spirits, telling funny stories (the point of which I own I couldn't always see) and dashing from subject to subject; it was rather primitive altogether—only two negro servants, and no pretence whatever; but although homely, it was interesting, and one certainly gets the impression of a powerful personality.

The President's frankness of speech naturally had repercussions in a not unexpected quarter. On 9th October 1906 the German Ambassador in Washington, Speck von Sternburg, reported to the German Foreign Office that "the President had invited the Kings of England and Italy to support his proposal at the Hague for the limitation of battleships."[1] Three months later (Jan. 5, 1907) the German Chancellor informed Sternburg:

According to information received here, England intends to use the Hague Conference for improving English-American relations at the cost of German-American. It is said that Mr. Bryce (Chief Secretary for Ireland, shortly afterwards Ambassador in Washington) should go to the Hague as chief English delegate, should acquaint himself with the affairs of U.S.A. and meet American wishes. You can inform President Roosevelt that we are ready to discuss previously with U.S.A. the questions to be brought up at the Hague.[2]

A month later the German Ambassador in London, Count von Metternich, reported to the German Foreign Office (Feb. 17) that the King was not desirous of the limitation of armaments being discussed at the Hague, but that the Liberal government was insisting upon it.[3] King Edward was supported in his view by the Admiralty, but the government was determined to bring the question before the Conference. Eventually the government

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. XXIII. i. p. 89, No. 7818.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. XXIII. i. p. 123, No. 7850.
[3] *Ibid.* vol. XXIII. i. p. 125, No. 7851.

acceded to the views of the King and the Admiralty and merely decided to support such a proposal from the American delegates. To what extent the opinions of King Edward were influenced on this subject by the American President is a matter for conjecture, but it is noteworthy that the King's influence was in the direction of ensuring British support for American proposals.

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V

The final letters between the King and President Roosevelt were exchanged early in 1908. Early in the February of that year the King presented Mr. Roosevelt with a book containing illustrations of the Sèvres Porcelain collection in Windsor Castle. In acknowledging the gift, on 12th February, Roosevelt made an allusion to the voyage of the American fleet round the world which was then in progress, and also to the question of Mongolian immigration:

My dear King Edward—The beautiful Sèvres Porcelain book has come, and I send this note of thanks by the Ambassador. The book is a delight to the eye—it is almost like seeing the porcelain.

I am much interested in the trip of our fleet to the Pacific; the ships have just come out of the Straits. I feel very strongly that the real interests of the English-speaking peoples are one, alike in the Atlantic and Pacific, and that, while scrupulously careful neither to insult nor to injure others, we should yet make it evident that we are ready and able to hold our own. In no country where the population is of our stock, and where the wage-workers, the labourers, are of the same blood as the employing classes, will it be possible to introduce a large number of workmen of an utterly alien race without the certainty of dangerous friction. The only sure way to avoid such friction, with its possible consequences of incalculable disaster, is by friendly agreement in advance to prevent the coming together in mass of the wage-workers of the two races, in either country.

But for the moment our internal problems here are far more pressing than our external ones. With us it is not as it is with you; our men of vast wealth do not fully realise that great responsibility must always go hand in hand with great privilege.

Again thanking you, and with very high regard, believe me, very sincerely yours, Theodore Roosevelt.

The King's autograph reply (March 5) ran:

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My dear Mr. President—Accept my best thanks for your letter of the 12th ultimo, which was delivered to me by your excellent and charming Ambassador, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, on his arrival in London, and it gave me great pleasure to hear from him that you were in excellent health and spirits.

I am so glad you like the book with illustrations of the Sèvres Porcelain collection at Windsor Castle, as I know you have a great appreciation of china.

We have watched with the greatest interest the cruise of your fine fleet in the Pacific and have admired the successful manner in which your Admirals have so far carried out this great undertaking. As you are no doubt aware, my Australian Colonies have conveyed through my Government an invitation to your fleet to visit their principal ports, and if it be possible for your Government to authorise the acceptance of this invitation, I feel sure that it will be warmly appreciated both here and in Australia.

I entirely agree with you that the interests of the English-speaking peoples are alike in the Atlantic and the Pacific, and I look forward with confidence to the co-operation of the English-speaking races becoming the most powerful civilising factor in the policy of the world.

The question of the immigration and competition of coloured races in other countries is one which presents many difficulties, and especially to me, who have so many coloured subjects in my Empire. It is one, however, which has, so far, proved capable of adjustment by friendly negotiation, and I rely upon the recent agreement, at which my Government have arrived with that of Japan, being loyally carried out in all its details by the Japanese Government.

Believe me, with high regard, dear Mr. President, yours very sincerely,

Edward R. & I.

With these letters the correspondence between the King and President Roosevelt appears to have ceased—but not their friendship, for the King was always anxious and eager to hear more about the most remarkable figure in American politics. Mr. Roosevelt, for his part, in planning his European tour of 1910, was looking forward eagerly to meeting the King. But that was not to be—the two men never saw one another.

The King's prediction, however, that if Roosevelt could visit England he would "see what a reception would be given to the President of the U.S. by the King of Great Britain and Ireland and by his people" was practically verified when in the May of 1910, Mr. Roosevelt came to England for the melancholy occasion of King Edward's funeral.

CHAPTER XIX

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN'S MINISTRY, 1905–1908

I

THE closing months of 1905 marked a complete change in the politics of the British Empire. Not only were there changes in South Africa, where Lord Selborne had succeeded Lord Milner as High Commissioner, and in India, where Lord Curzon had resigned his position as Viceroy, thus opening the way to the Kitchener reforms and subsequently to the Morley-Minto reforms, but still vaster changes took place at home, where a disunited Conservative government gave way to a young, vigorous, and comparatively united Liberal ministry. The Conservative ministry, split by the fiscal controversy, had long been tottering to its doom, and had only survived by a series of adroit and astonishing feats of plate-spinning on the part of that past-master of political tactics, Mr. A. J. Balfour. Finally on 4th December 1905 Mr. Balfour suddenly resigned.

The choice of Mr Balfour's successor had been for some time under consideration. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had, since February 1899, been accepted by the Liberal party as its leader in the House of Commons, but his strong criticism of British methods of waging the South African War and his faith in Home Rule as the solution of Irish difficulties had impaired his hold over many Liberal leaders of an intellectual capacity manifestly superior to his own. In November 1905, however, he had removed one obstacle to his accession to supreme political power by assuring Mr. Asquith that he would not introduce a Home Rule Bill into the next Parliament. This concession rendered his appointment as Prime Minister more generally acceptable, and,

when Mr. Balfour resigned, the King immediately sent for Sir Henry to take his place.

The King had first come into personal association with Campbell-Bannerman when he was Secretary of State for War in the Liberal government of 1892–95, and although he was not at one with Campbell-Bannerman in the scheme of Army Reform which then compelled the withdrawal of the Duke of Cambridge, he could not withhold approval of his tactful handling of a difficult situation.

The two men had much in common. However widely they differed in their views on home and foreign policy, neither of them was insular in his attitude to foreign peoples. Sir Henry, like the King, appreciated the French character, spoke the language fluently, and found most of his recreation in reading French novels. He knew Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of all ranks, and, like the King, enjoyed the friendship of General Galliffet and had frequented the *salon* of the Princess Mathilde. Later on, Sir Henry's attitude during the South African War and his reflections on the humanity of the British Army had offended the King, and even as late as 28th June 1905 the King, although he had seen him occasionally at Marienbad, had hesitated to meet him at a dinner-party at Lord Carrington's. On reflection, however, he decided to go. Campbell-Bannerman sat next the King after dinner and "they got on capitally together," the King being in excellent spirits and remaining until one o'clock. The King, on leaving, said to Lord Carrington, "I like Campbell-Bannerman immensely, and I think he is quite sound on foreign politics." To which Lord Carrington replied: "If we come in, Sir Henry will make Your Majesty a first-rate Prime Minister and will furnish you with a good government." The King laughed and said, "Of that I am convinced, and I hope you will be in it."

"I was very glad," Lord Carrington relates, "to get the chance of bringing the two together, as Campbell-Bannerman had been much run down—he was called unpatriotic and a 'little Englander,' and his unfortunate expression 'methods of barbarism' (applied to the concentration camps and the burning of farmhouses) was twisted during the Boer war into a slur on our badly-armed, over-worked, and gallant soldiers. He is very unpopular with Court and Society generally. But he is so straight, so good-tempered, so clever, and so full of humour

that I am certain people will like him when they get to know him." [1]

Lord Esher had supplied the King's Secretary with elaborate notes on the procedure followed by Queen Victoria on the occasion of a change of government, and the King strictly followed the established precedent. On parting with Mr. Balfour, Lord Knollys, with the King's approval, wrote a letter to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (December 4) announcing Mr. Balfour's resignation and inviting him to an interview with the King at Buckingham Palace at 10.45 the following morning. The meeting was thoroughly good-humoured on both sides. Campbell-Bannerman accepted the King's invitation to form a ministry, and kissed hands on his appointment as Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury.

Campbell-Bannerman soon became personally congenial to the King, who grew to appreciate the pawky humour and the general kindliness of temper of "the gay old dog with a twinkle in his eye." He had the knack of amusing the King with good stories, and never veiled his own political views or intentions from his sovereign. His comments on his colleagues were amazingly frank: he greatly amused the King on one occasion by referring to the austere Mr. John Morley as "that old-maidish Priscilla."

II

One decision which the King had taken on Mr. Balfour's suggestion, on 27th December 1903, became operative on the assumption of office by the new Prime Minister. The anomalous position of the Prime Minister, who had hitherto been ignored as an officer of State in the formal orders of precedence, was then repaired. It had been first suggested that on the retirement of the then Conservative ministry, the Prime Minister's precedence should follow that of the Lord Chancellor. The King demurred to the proposed placing, and suggested that the chief minister should follow the Lord Privy Seal, but it was finally decided that the Prime Minister should follow after the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord High Chancellor, and the Archbishop of York.

On 20th March 1905 a warrant was prepared for issue whenever the next administration should be formed, and on 3rd

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

December 1905 the instrument was executed by the Home Office by direction of Mr. Balfour on his resignation, and the Prime Minister of England was formally recognised as being, after the members of the royal family, the fourth most important subject of the King.

III

At the first it seemed rather doubtful whether or not Campbell-Bannerman, the ostensible leader of the Liberal party, could secure the co-operation of all sections of his party, in which there were acute divisions on both home and foreign questions. Lord Rosebery had lately refused in public to march under his banner, and the three ablest members of the party, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Edward Grey, championed Imperial and foreign policies which seemed to conflict with the party leader's principles. Yet a Liberal ministry from which these three men were missing was not likely to enjoy any widespread confidence. However, an accommodation was reached with all except Lord Rosebery, and all sections were ultimately represented in the newly-formed ministry.

Both Mr. Haldane and Sir Edward Grey desired that Mr. Asquith should lead in the House of Commons and that the Prime Minister should go to the House of Lords. Their point of view was seconded by Campbell-Bannerman's physician, Dr. Ott, who wrote to him from Vienna warning him most earnestly against taking the double post of Leader of the House of Commons and Prime Minister on the ground that his health would not stand it. But Campbell-Bannerman was his own captain, and would not budge from his self-appointed task.

The King was aware of the doubts cherished by Campbell-Bannerman's colleagues as to his fitness to lead the House of Commons, and of their wish that he should accept promotion to the House of Lords, and he tactfully inquired as to Campbell-Bannerman's attitude to the proposal. He spoke of the heavy calls on the physical strength of a Prime Minister who sat in the House of Commons, and good-naturedly reminded "C.-B.," who was rather more than five years his senior, that neither of them was a young man any more. But Campbell-Bannerman had already (December 6) made up his mind to stay in the House of Commons, and was uninfluenced by the King's hint.

Like Queen Victoria, King Edward abstained from making any suggestion as to the distribution of the more important ministerial offices, and he only inquired as to whom the Foreign Secretaryship would be offered To the King's satisfaction Lord Cromer was mentioned, and Campbell-Bannerman made him the offer. But the next day Campbell-Bannerman wrote that Lord Cromer declined on grounds of health Again the party leaders differed from the Prime Minister, and they pressed earnestly that the Foreign Office should be offered to Sir Edward Grey, whose views on foreign policy inclined to the Imperialist side, whilst those of Campbell-Bannerman were of the Gladstonian colour. Finally a settlement was reached and Grey was appointed.

After much negotiation, which led to one or two sensational rumours as to troubles in the progress of cabinet making, Campbell-Bannerman submitted, on the morning of 8th December, the list of his new cabinet to the King. To the new Prime Minister's embarrassment the names appeared in *The Times* before the King had formally signed his approval,[1] but the King, as Sir Henry told Lord Shaw, "had been first-rate through it all" and there had been "no difficulty in that quarter." [2]

The new cabinet was large, though not beyond recent precedent, and it was recognised that there must necessarily be an

[1] The new cabinet consisted of

Lord Chancellor	Sir Robert Reid (afterwards Lord Loreburn).
First Lord of the Treasury	Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.
Lord President of the Council	Earl of Crewe
Lord Privy Seal	Marquis of Ripon.
Home Secretary	Mr H J. Gladstone.
Foreign Secretary	Sir Edward Grey.
Colonial Secretary	Earl of Elgin.
War Secretary	Mr R B Haldane.
Indian Secretary	Mr. John Morley.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Mr. H. H. Asquith
First Lord of the Admiralty	Lord Tweedmouth
Secretary for Scotland	Mr. John Sinclair.
President of the Board of Trade	Mr. Lloyd George.
President of the Local Government Board	Mr John Burns.
President of the Board of Agriculture	Earl Carrington.
President of the Board of Education	Mr. Augustine Birrell.
Chief Secretary for Ireland	Mr. James Bryce.
Postmaster-General	Mr. Sydney Buxton.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Sir H. H. Fowler.

[2] Lord Shaw's *Letters to Isobel*, 1921, p. 264.

inner and an outer cabinet, the main course of policy being determined by the former.

The cabinet thus appointed contained many men who had not hitherto come into contact with the King, as well as one or two of his old friends. Sir Edward Grey, the new Foreign Secretary, had been known to the King from infancy, the King having been his godfather. Sir Edward's father had been one of the King's first equerries, and the King often recalled to Sir Edward his friendly relations with his father. Whilst Grey was Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Gladstone's last ministry the King had come into contact with him and had learnt to appreciate his cautious sagacity and rigid principles.

Lord Carrington, the new President of the Board of Agriculture, was another old and valued friend. The King had recommended him to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman on 6th December for the post of Lord Chamberlain, adding: "I look upon Charlie as a brother, and I should like him as Lord Chamberlain again, which is now a most important office." But Lord Carrington demurred on "medical grounds," and the Lord Chamberlainship was offered to Lord Althorp with a Viscounty. The King was pleased with the appointment, though, as he wrote to Lord Carrington on 8th December:

MY DEAR CHARLIE—Your kind letter received to-day has greatly touched me. It is a very great disappointment to me that you are unable to take up the important post of Lord Chamberlain under the new government, and still more for the reason. But from the report you give, and having read your Doctor's letter which Francis [1] sent me, I quite understand that it would not be possible. I trust, however, that you will be able to fill another post and that your health will daily improve.—Ever yours very sincerely, EDWARD R.[2]

It was only in the choice of the political members of the royal household that the King actively intervened. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had diplomatically placed these appointments in the hands of Lord Carrington, who was *persona grata* to the King. The King early nominated a personal friend, Sir Edward Colebrooke, whose wife was a daughter of Lord Alfred

[1] Lord Knollys. [2] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

Paget, to be a lord-in-waiting, with promotion to a peerage. Lord Herschell was also suggested as a lord-in-waiting, but when the King read that he was at the same time to act as a private secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he promptly vetoed his court appointment. The King also demurred to the appointment of Lord Wimborne as Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset, preferring Lord Portman for the post According to the King (March 28, 1906) Lord Portman was "the right man in every way," and the King disliked his being passed over in favour of a "political turncoat" However, he acquiesced, "but unwillingly," to the appointment of the government's nominee

The King complained at the time that Liberal partisanship was too exclusively a criterion for appointment to non-political office and that consequently fit men were not secured, and his complaint was renewed when a few months later there was some difficulty in filling the post of Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland The office, according to the Prime Minister, required a man of means, but his remark to the King that it was not intended to reappoint Lord Leven because he had "let it down" was interpreted by the King to mean "because he is a Conservative, I presume," and the government's nominee, Lord Colebrooke, who was deemed by the King a scarcely appropriate choice, only accepted under pressure. The King exculpated Lord Colebrooke from all blame, and found fault with "the pressure put on him (and also on me) by the Prime Minister." Lord Colebrooke proved the truth of the King's criticism by retiring next year in favour of Lord Kinnaird.

Several of the more senior ministers in the new Liberal cabinet had long been known to the King. Mr. Asquith, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, was by no means a stranger, and though there could not be said to be great friendship on either side, the King appreciated the legal acumen, classical oratory, and stoical courage of the last of the great Gladstonians.

The bulk of the cabinet, however, consisted of men who had never held subordinate office, and some fear was expressed by the King and his circle that their inexperience might lead to indiscretions. Certainly no distinctive respect for royalty coloured the creed of the party which now took office. The Radical leaders and their followers had, during the long exclusion of their party from office, acknowledged in deed or word little

reverence for the activities and processes of royalty. Yet the loyal sentiment bred by historic tradition in almost all ranks of the British people was far from extinct even in the advanced wing of political partisanship, and the King in his personal relations with the new ministers showed every sign of amiability. When in November 1906 he received Mr. John Burns, who was an extreme Radical, if not definitely a Socialist, Burns expressed himself highly pleased by the cordiality of his reception. The personal contact with the King, into which the new Radical ministry was brought on its admission to office, generated in a broad sense a marked sympathy with the wearer of the crown and a genuine respect for the ceremonial observances of the court. The government of the last four and a half years of King Edward's reign, however radical and democratic, in no way diminished the legitimate influence of the monarch in affairs of state. In fact, King Edward found his new ministers readier than their predecessors to consult his wishes in ceremonial and other matters which touched his *amour-propre*. With many of them, indeed, notably Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Mr. John (afterwards Viscount) Morley, the Secretary of State for India, the King encouraged relations of familiarity which exceeded in warmth and frankness anything that had been experienced in the earlier days of his rule while the Conservatives held sway. This result was partly due to his instinctive adaptation of conduct to circumstances, but the main cause was the pervasive regard for the formularies and spirit of constitutional monarchy which began to mould the actions of ministers in all direct and private intercourse with the sovereign.

Naturally there was bound to be some divergence of opinion between the sovereign and some of the more ardent Liberals, and with the extreme opinions of some of his new ministers the King did not conceal his lack of sympathy. On 7th January 1906 he called the new Prime Minister's attention to the election address of Mr. John Burns, the President of the Local Government Board, in which he declared himself in favour of the abolition of the House of Lords, adding:

> As Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has so recently recommended several prominent members of the House of Commons to be peers, the King is somewhat surprised that a member of the cabinet should have made this declaration.

The Prime Minister in reply was quite conciliatory :

That is the worst of the abrupt appointment of men to the cabinet without serving an apprenticeship in subordinate office. I have had two or three cases of want of discretion already from the *novi homines*, including the Secretary of State for War.

Before long one of the newest newcomers of all, Mr Lloyd George, was to rouse even more drastic protests from the King.

IV

On 8th January 1906 the King presided at a meeting of the Privy Council at Buckingham Palace at which a proclamation was issued dissolving Parliament. The general election, which occupied the attention of the country during the last weeks of January, resulted in a crushing defeat for the Unionists.[1] Even the Unionist leader could not find a foothold in the general landslide. On 14th January 1906 Mr. Balfour was heavily defeated in East Manchester, for which he had sat since 1885. The King at once sent a charming message of sympathy, which Mr. Balfour acknowledged. The defeat had aroused in Mr. Balfour an intense interest in politics, and his reply to Lord Knollys (January 17, 1906) emphasised the way in which his eagerness for the political fray had been reinforced by his defeat :

If you had asked me when we last met whether I should much mind permanently leaving politics, I should have answered in the negative. But I am so profoundly interested in what is *now* going on, that I should return a very different answer to-day. We have here to do with something much more important than the swing of the pendulum or all the squabbles about Free Trade and Fiscal Reform. We are face to face (no doubt in a milder form) with the Socialistic difficulties which loom so large on the Continent. Unless I am greatly mistaken the election of 1906 inaugurates a new era.

[1] The Liberals, with the Labour and Nationalists' parties together, gained 229 seats to the Unionists' 14. The Ministerial following, which included 377 Liberal, 53 Labour members, and 83 Irish Nationalists, reached a total of 513, while the Opposition only mustered 157—132 Conservatives and 25 Liberal-Unionists Of the Labour members, 29 were approved by the Labour Representative Committee and pledged to sit and act as a separate party ; the other 24 were more or less identified with the Liberal party. The Liberals alone had a majority of 84 over all other parties in the House.

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The King, who had no wish to see Mr. Balfour's place as leader of the opposition taken by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, was anxious that a seat should be found for the ex-Prime Minister before Parliament met. But all nominations had been made for seats yet to be contested, save at Edinburgh University, where a Scottish doctor would not give way, and consequently Mr. Balfour had to wait until a vacancy was created in the City of London in March by the retirement of Mr. Alban Gibbs. Here Mr. Balfour was elected on 27th February by a large majority over the Unionist free trader, Mr. Gibson Bowles, and so resumed his place as leader of the opposition, a post which had been temporarily filled, not by Mr. Chamberlain, as the King feared, but by Mr. Walter Long.

The Liberal triumph was complete. They had gained, with the support of the Nationalist and Labour members, a working majority of 356 over their Conservative opponents. They had discomfited Mr. Balfour, Mr. Lyttelton, Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Brodrick, and Lord Hugh Cecil. Wales had not returned a single Conservative member. The pendulum had swung further than ever before. Well indeed might Mr. Balfour judge that the election had inaugurated a new era!

V

The advent of the Liberal party to power after such a long period in the wilderness was the occasion of no little rejoicing in the progressive camp, and the opinion rapidly spread that the spoils of office would be the greater because of their long exclusion. Great were the hopes of the Tadpoles and the Tapers, and even the democratic Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman found himself unable to resist the suggestions that he should give a peerage here and a privy councillorship there, and so reward his plebeian valiants. Scarcely had he formed his new government than he suggested the bestowal of peerages on several influential members of his party who were retiring from the House of Commons. Apart from the peerage to be conferred on the Lord Chancellor, it was proposed to ennoble nine Liberal stalwarts with a view to strengthening the position of the government in the House of Lords. Campbell-Bannerman also sought the honour of privy councillorship for other veterans of his party,

among them Henry Labouchere, who had long been a frank and cynical critic of society and the press. Queen Victoria had always regarded Labouchere with active dislike, but the King proved his complacence by expressing emphatic approval of the bestowal on him of the suggested recognition.

The King, although he recognised the justice of blooding the Liberal hounds after their long exclusion from power, warned the Prime Minister against too large a number of honours. To his surprise, six months later, Campbell-Bannerman proposed that a further batch of Liberals should be honoured on the occasion of the King's official birthday on 29th June 1906. The Liberal party had still, he said, "such large arrears to make up," and he submitted to the King the names of seven Liberal supporters for peerages, and a further list of eight for privy councillorships. The King, although he demurred to such a large batch, only took strong exception to the proposal to elevate Mr. W J. Pirrie, the Belfast shipowner, to the Upper House, and at his request Lord Knollys wrote to the Prime Minister on 17th June :

While, however, His Majesty approves of six of the names you have submitted to him, he cannot at the same time help feeling that a further creation of seven Peerages, after one of ten (or if you deduct the Lord Chancellor, of nine) when you took office, making sixteen in six months, is excessive in so short a time, notwithstanding the fact that the Liberals have been crying in the wilderness for some years past His Majesty would therefore, at all events, suggest that only four Peerages should now be created and that the remaining three might be recommended on the occasion of his Birthday in November ; but he would be glad if some other name could be substituted for that of Mr. Pirrie

He would likewise wish the same arrangement to be made in regard to the Privy Councillors . viz. that there should be four on 28th June and four more on 9th November.

The King directs me to add that he has a strong unwillingness to the creation of a large number of Peers and of Privy Councillors at a single time, and that while he quite understands your natural wish to strengthen the government in the House of Lords, he hopes the number will not be overdone, and likewise that as a rule men only will be elected who will prove themselves to be really useful in the House.

But Campbell-Bannerman stuck to his guns, and the King approved the seven peerages (including Pirrie's) on the under-

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standing that no more political peers should be created that year.[1]

Among the many honours, one in particular gave the King great pleasure. Since the time when Lord Breadalbane had been granted the Garter at the instigation of Mr. Gladstone, no Liberal had been so honoured, and it was at the King's own wish that a vacant Garter was offered to Lord Carrington. To the recipient's letter of thanks the King replied from Balmoral (September 29, 1906):

MY DEAR CHARLIE—Many thanks for your kind letter. Nothing could have given me greater pleasure than to bestow the vacant order of the Garter on you whom I have always looked upon as one of my oldest and best friends. You are I think also in every respect worthy of an honour which I feel sure every Englishman prizes!

Hoping to see you on Thursday week.—Ever yours very sincerely, EDWARD R.

On "Thursday week" (October 4) Lord Carrington was the King's guest at Balmoral. "The King sent at once for me," Lord Carrington records, "and told me that he intended to invest me with the Garter on Monday week at Buckingham Palace. He was looking well and was sitting in a 'hunting Stuart' kilt and coat. He was kindness itself and kept me twenty minutes, expressing himself perfectly satisfied with Sir Henry and the government, particularly praising Grey and the Foreign Office. He was not altogether pleased with Lloyd George's attack on the Lords, which he thought would do harm."[2]

When the time came for the formal investiture at Buckingham

[1] The antipathy to Lord Pirrie was not confined to the King. Three years later, when Lord Pirrie was appointed a K.P., the Knights of St. Patrick, resenting his appointment to their Order, declined to attend his investiture. Lord Aberdeen then suggested to the King either that his investiture should be delayed or that there should still be a public investiture whether the other knights were present or not. To this Lord Knollys replied (January 24, 1909) that the King "regrets he is unable to approve of your proposal that the Investiture of Lord Pirrie should be either delayed or that there should still be a public one. The King considers that to have a public investiture with only one Knight of St. Patrick would make the ceremony an absurdity, and he must ask that Lord Pirrie shall be privately invested by you immediately on your return to Ireland. The King feels that he has been placed in a very false position by Lord Pirrie having been recommended to him for the St. Patrick when none of the other Knights will meet him in order to be present at his Investiture."

[2] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

Palace (October 15) Lord Carrington found the King dressed in Field Marshal's uniform and wearing the Garter. "I knelt—he put ribbon over my shoulders, fixed the star, and handed me the Garter and Collar, and gave me his hand to kiss. Then, holding my hand, he said: 'I have the greatest pleasure in giving the Garter, the finest Order in the world, to you—one of my oldest and best friends, and I have selected this room as it is filled with reminiscences of my Indian Tour when we went there in 1875.'" Could any other sentence have been more appropriate?

VI

The King's relations with the majority of the leading Liberal ministers grew more cordial as the year wore on, and although there were many points in their programme with which he did not agree, yet he exerted to the full that charm of manner which he found such a potent solvent of friction and disagreements. Especially did his friendship with the new Prime Minister grow. In August 1906 the King and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman both took the cure at Marienbad, and their joint sojourn there resulted in much intercourse on matters of state as well as on lighter subjects. This visit of the Prime Minister to Marienbad was, however, attended by a tragic experience. His wife, whose health had been failing, came there in a vain hope of recovery from a serious illness, but soon after her arrival her health steadily deteriorated, and on 30th August she died. The King was full of sympathy for the stricken Minister. As he wrote to Lady Londonderry: "It is a terrible blow to him, as they were so devoted to each other, but for her a happy release from continual suffering."

The couple were indeed devotedly attached to one another, and the King's keenest sympathies were aroused with the bereaved husband, to whom he wrote:

MY DEAR SIR HENRY—The sad news has just reached me that Lady Campbell-Bannerman has passed away—and although I hardly like intruding so soon on your great grief, still I am anxious to express my warmest sympathy with you at the great loss you have sustained. I know how great your mutual devotion was—and what a blank the departed one will leave in your home—still I feel sure that you can now only wish that your beloved

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wife may be at peace and rest and free from all further suffering and pain.

All the British community here will, I know, share the same feeling for you on this most truly sad occasion which I entertain.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

EDWARD R. & I.

The King's sympathy did not stop there. In order to relieve the bereaved husband of a melancholy task, he himself arranged the details of the funeral service at Marienbad, which he also attended. The body was taken for interment to Sir Henry's Scottish estate at Meigle, Perthshire, where the burial took place on 5th September. The King wrote to Sir Henry through an equerry four days later:

The King has thought of you much since you started on that melancholy journey, and prays that some comfort may be vouchsafed to you in the knowledge that her troubles and sufferings are now at an end.

Gradually the King and his first Liberal Prime Minister became greater and greater friends, and the King's regard for the genial Scotchman grew into a warm and lasting appreciation. When, early in 1908, it was rumoured that "C.-B.'s" health was not so good as it might be, the King told Lord Knollys that "it would be a bad day for the country if anything happened to Campbell-Bannerman."

In political correspondence, however, Campbell-Bannerman was less communicative with the King than the King approved, and though the King had often found Mr. Balfour rather more argumentative on paper than he liked, he scarcely appreciated the curtness of Campbell-Bannerman's communications and his frequent failure to mention matters which the King deemed to concern the authority of the sovereign. Lord Esher, who kept the King well supplied with precedents from Queen Victoria's reign as to the sovereign's right to be consulted constantly by his ministers, had called the King's attention in September 1905 to the growing deficiencies in the supply of information which Mr. Balfour's ministry was tendering the King. Cabinet decisions were constantly taken before the King heard of the points at issue. Esher pointed out that this difficulty would increase with a new ministry, which was certain to be of Liberal colour and whose members would be "untrained in the monarchical system,"

and the prediction proved to be correct. When, early in 1906, the Education Bill came before the cabinet in the first draft, the King complained of the meagreness of the details which were supplied him, a complaint which he was constantly to repeat in regard to this and other matters. Lord Esher had no hesitation in attributing the curtness of the Prime Minister's letters (December 10, 1906) to his laziness and indifference to detail, and truth to tell it could not be denied that the new Prime Minister was certainly one of the more leisurely of mankind. The King, however, while grumbling at the sparseness of the information supplied to him, thoroughly appreciated those traits in Sir Henry's character that made him such a charming companion—especially in the following years at Marienbad.

VII

The new Liberal government was by now well embarked upon its programme of social reform. Though the King was not keenly interested in domestic politics, regarding much of it as akin to the parish pump, his interest was aroused when any mention was made of his name or of the hereditary powers of the House of Lords. Long before his reign he had come to the conclusion that any attack on the hereditary principle of the House of Lords must inevitably react on the hereditary principle of the monarchy, and with characteristic consistency he thought that the House of Lords, like the Crown itself, should be above the attacks of party politicians. But some of the newcomers to the domain of government were by no means inclined to be overburdened with respect either for the Crown or for the hereditary House, and though the Crown was more or less kept out of party disputes, the House of Lords, during King Edward's remaining years, came in for more than its normal share of abuse and vituperation from Liberal politicians, not least of whom was Mr. Lloyd George. Quite early, moreover, Mr. Lloyd George transgressed by an incautious reference to the government of Wales. During the progress of the Education Bill, the Welsh leader, on 17th July 1906, used language in the House of Commons which suggested to the King that the government intended "to institute a minister for Wales." No proposal of the kind had been submitted to the King, who at once wrote (July 18) to the Prime Minister :

I am much astonished to read an account in the newspaper of the debate in the House of Commons when it was stated (yesterday) that it is proposed by my government to institute a Minister for Wales. I have heard *nothing* on the subject from the Prime Minister. This proceeding is most unconstitutional and I cannot pass it over in silence.

The Prime Minister at once expostulated with his colleague, who explained that he only intended to move the appointment of a minister who would have independent control of Welsh education. The Prime Minister forwarded Lloyd George's explanation to the King (July 19), who described the excuse as "a very meagre one," and wished to know "whether he recommended a special department for Wales with a minister as is the case with Scotland." Finally the King, after due assurance that no new minister would be appointed, accepted Mr. Lloyd George's explanation, after hinting that the Prime Minister should exert a little stronger control over the members of his cabinet.

During the autumn recess, 1906, the House of Lords was severely censured by Liberal speakers in the country, and Mr. Lloyd George, in a speech at Llanelly on 29th September, declared himself frankly as ready to come to close quarters with the question of diminishing the Lords' powers. After a general survey of the government's legislative record, he enumerated the big bills of the session, ending with the Plural Voting Bill, which they had put through its second reading, and meant to carry through the third reading and send it up to the House of Lords, "and then something would happen. There would be a great game of football, he could assure them, on that field before long." Then followed sarcastic comments on "that exalted chamber" and its action with regard to the Education Bill which would perhaps pass some day "while my Lords were sleeping, as they often did." "In opposing the Education Bill," he added, "the House of Lords was taking up its quarrel with the people of the country; it was beginning early and would not have to wait long before it was settled."

The King was offended by the minister's frankness, and again complained to the Prime Minister. Campbell-Bannerman replied (October 16, 1906) to Lord Knollys:

I have passed on to him the objection taken and admonished him to avoid such a tone in future. . . . Lloyd George is essenti-

ally a fighting man, and he has not yet learned that once he gets inside an office his sword and spear should only be used on extreme occasions, and with the consent of his colleagues. In all business connected with his department and in House of Commons work he is most conciliatory, but the combative spirit seems to get the better of him when he is talking about other subjects I greatly regret his outburst, and hope it will not be repeated.

But the virulent Welshman was not thus easily to be restrained. Addressing the Palmerston Club at Oxford on 1st December, while deprecating an immediate dissolution, Mr. Lloyd George added: "Whether dissolution comes sooner or later, it will be a much larger issue than the Education Bill. It will come upon this issue: whether the country is to be governed by the King and his Peers or by the King and his people." The King at once (December 3) protested at the speaker's introduction of his name, which he regarded as violating constitutional practice. He wished his name to be omitted, "even as a phrase," from the minister's invective. It was hopeless, he feared, to try to prevent Mr. Lloyd George from making violent attacks on the House of Lords, in spite of the previous correspondence.

The Prime Minister was now in a mood to defend his colleague. The House of Lords, he pointed out (December 4), had turned the Education Bill "upside down," and it was "hard to restrain the feelings certain to be legitimately roused when a Bill so largely supported in the country and passed in the Lower House by such a majority is deliberately converted in the House of Lords into a measure whose purpose is the exact reverse." Mr. Lloyd George had already promised to be moderate. "I think he did not greatly err, especially when the altered and exasperating circumstances are considered. Mr. Lloyd George used the phrase out of respect, without the slightest idea of implying any connivance or co-operation, and that was so understood." The minister, however, professed profound regret if he had inadvertently offended.

The King considered the explanation, and on the following day Lord Knollys replied that the King was well aware how angry and bitter were the feelings which the Lords' amendments had roused in the Liberal party, but urged emphatically that, as a cabinet minister, Mr. Lloyd George "cannot with propriety

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indulge in that freedom of speech which if he were a private member he would be at liberty to gratify." For the time Mr. Lloyd George became a little more restrained, but even royal disfavour could not keep him away from his pet subject for long.

VIII

The Education Bill had indeed been a source of great difficulty. It had been considered by the cabinet since 25th February, and its terms were finally agreed to on 26th March. Campbell-Bannerman represented the Bill to the King as satisfactorily redressing the grievances of Nonconformists and satisfying moderate Churchmen and Roman Catholics. It abolished all tests for teachers and gave public authorities full control of all religious instruction, seeking to bring denominational schools into harmony with the national system. The Minister of Education, Mr. Birrell, as early as 31st January, had described the measure as "the Bill of the session," which was destined to remove all religious difficulties in the path of popular education. Religious bodies throughout the country at once showed anxiety, and before the Bill was introduced a hostile agitation threatened on the part of both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Bill was introduced by Mr. Birrell in the House of Commons on 9th April and met with a very mixed reception. The King meanwhile had left for a Mediterranean cruise, and it was from Athens that he studied the Education Bill and the fire of criticism which it at once drew. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke plainly of the Church's objection in a letter (April 13, 1906) to Knollys which was intended for the King's perusal. The Archbishop complained that the account given to him of the Bill's provisions before its introduction was more favourable to the Church than the actual text as laid before the House of Commons. He had been assured by the Prime Minister, Lord Crewe, and Mr. Birrell that the House of Commons might accept some modification in the sense which he desired; but whilst deprecating the changes made in the text, he declared himself to be no "irreconcilable" and only anxious to work with the government "towards an amicable, reasonable, and permanent solution."

On the Archbishop's letter the King, who received it while staying in Athens, penned in his own writing these remarks:

I am much interested in reading the Archbishop's letter, which is an excellent one. He has not been well treated by the government. Who has by this Bill? I read Mr. Birrell's speech very carefully. It was certainly most able and must have been interesting to listen to. But the Bill is most unfair and dangerous, and instead of smoothing matters will produce violent dissensions between the Church of England and Roman Catholics on one side and the Nonconformists on the other. In fact, a kind of political-religious warfare will ensue, which is most undesirable, especially just now. The Prime Minister professes to like the Archbishop and values his opinion. At least, he told me so. But I certainly do not believe in him, and the way he forces these violent measures with such haste on the House of Commons does not augur well for the future. The conduct of the government in the matter is, by the Archbishop's letter, most Jesuitical.

The Archbishop now prepared at the King's request "a concise memo in simple words stating the objections to the Bill by the Church of England," and forwarded it on 23rd April. "I am exceedingly glad," he added, "that the King should be taking a real interest in this question."

Campbell-Bannerman, for his part, kept the King informed of what was happening in the House, though his communications still took the form of sparse notes. To one such, of the 9th April, containing only seven lines, stating that difficulties of detail in the Draft Bill had been adjusted, the King appended the sarcastic comment: "What valuable information! E.R."

Through the Easter recess the hostile agitation gathered strength. The second reading opened on 7th May, but on 10th May the motion for the rejection of the Bill was negatived by 410 votes to 204. The Irish Nationalist members, who as Roman Catholics heartily disliked the Bill, voted with the opposition. On 18th June the government adopted a plan to expedite the progress of the Bill which was known as "closure by compartments." By such means the Bill passed swiftly through committee, and the third reading was carried by a large majority on 30th July.

In the House of Lords the Bill was read a second time on 3rd August without a division after a three days' debate, but

announcement was made of drastic amendments which were to be moved in committee. An autumn session was deemed necessary by the government and Parliament adjourned until 23rd October. The Lords went into committee on the Education Bill two days later, and the revision on lines which the Church favoured occupied the Lords and excited the attention of the country until 22nd November.

Early in November 1906 the Prime Minister informed the King that the House of Commons could not be expected to accept the House of Lords' drastic amendments. The King described the anticipated deadlock as "a most regrettable situation" (November 7, 1906). He fully recognised the critical state of affairs, and resented the meagre information which the Prime Minister sent him of the cabinet's intentions. At the King's request, Lord Knollys wrote to the Prime Minister on 23rd November:

> The King desires me to thank you for your cabinet letter of the 21st in which you say that the meeting "was entirely engaged with the arrangements of public business necessary for the conclusion of the Session."
>
> His Majesty can, however, hardly suppose, after what you told him at Windsor, that *no* discussion took place on the probability of an important and serious conflict arising between the House of Lords and the House of Commons.
>
> This is a matter which must closely concern the Sovereign, and the King directs me to let you know that he is naturally anxious to be informed if any discussion occurred which would enable you to ascertain the views of your colleagues on the subject in question.

Campbell-Bannerman replied that the cabinet had not engaged in any detailed discussion, because it was quite unanimous in insisting on the main provisions of the Education Bill, which represented the extreme limits of concession. At the same time the government were anxious for an amicable conclusion, were one in any way possible.

While the House of Lords was reconstructing the Bill in committee, the Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury were both guests of the King at Windsor. In spite of far-reaching differences between the two men on the pending education conflict, they showed, under the King's influence, a conciliatory disposition

towards one another. In November the King expressed a wish that the Archbishop should be invited to mediate between the Lords and the government, and by the King's wish the Archbishop attended cabinet conferences on the Bill.

The King was acutely interested in the impasse, and desired to use all his influence towards finding a solution acceptable to all parties. The first step he thought to be a second interview of a private but semi-official kind between the Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr Morley was invited to sound the Prime Minister, who promptly assented to the proposed interview. The King thereupon addressed him the following letter (November 25).

In view of the serious state of affairs which would arise were a conflict to take place between the House of Lords and the House of Commons on the amendments passed by the former House on the Education Bill, the King feels certain that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman will agree with him in thinking it is most important that there should, if possible, be a compromise in respect to these amendments. The King would therefore ask Sir Henry to consider whether it would not be highly desirable that Sir Henry should discuss the matter with the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the hope that some *modus vivendi*, on the line of mutual concessions, could be found to avoid the threatened collision between the two Houses, for the King thinks it would be deplorable from a constitutional as well as from every point of view, were such a conflict to occur.

The King would wish to call Sir Henry's attention to pages 7 to 43 in the 2nd volume of Archbishop Tait's life, when a contest was on the eve of taking place between the two Houses on the Irish Church question in 1869.[1]

The King proposes to send a copy of this letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman replied, the same day, from Downing Street, that

he will at once place himself at the disposition of the Archbishop, in accordance with Your Majesty's desire, and will

[1] The King's attention had been called by Lord Esher to Queen Victoria's intervention in 1869, when the two Houses were in violent discord on the question of Irish Church disestablishment. Queen Victoria then invited the Archbishop of Canterbury to seek some compromise with the Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, as to the terms of the government measure, so that the House of Lords might accept it.

endeavour, in whatever seems to be the most effective way, to advance the prospect of an arrangement.

He has the advantage, owing to Your Majesty's kindness, of having had a very full and frank discussion of the subject with His Grace at Windsor, and probably matters have ripened somewhat in the meanwhile, but it may be that the time has not yet arrived for an actual accommodation.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman begs leave again to assure Your Majesty of his earnest desire to avoid unnecessary friction or conflict, and to spare Your Majesty trouble and anxiety. He was aware, broadly, of the incidents of 1869, but has refreshed his knowledge by reading the passages in Archbishop Tait's life to which Your Majesty kindly referred him.

The Archbishop, on his part, was no less eager to meet the King's suggestion, and though ill in bed wrote to Lord Knollys (November 25):

I appreciate highly the King's action in this terribly anxious and difficult matter, and I earnestly hope that His Majesty's mediation may prove effective. Certainly for my part I have no wish to be unreasonable or unaccommodating in any negotiation, provided we can avert any grave sacrifice of principle and any intolerable public wrong.

I am unfortunately ill and mainly in bed, whence I now write. I have to get up for some important duties and conferences for an hour at a time and then return thither.

The Prime Minister, in accordance with the King's kindly wish, has written, and he is coming to see me to-morrow (Monday) evening.

The King added the note: "Pray express my sympathy at his illness and let him see the Prime Minister's letter and my answer which I am sending you. E.R."

The next day the Prime Minister visited the Archbishop at Lambeth Palace, and reported to the King that

the Archbishop showed, as usual, the most fair and conciliatory spirit. Practically, the principal point on which His Grace insisted as all-important was that the ordinary teacher should not be prevented from giving, if he were willing to do so, the special and distinctive religious teaching. Your Majesty's Government, on the other part, think that this would be inadmissible, in its full extent, because it would leave the voluntary denominational schools practically as they now are in this respect, with all their powers and privileges notwithstanding their being

nominally under the control of the local authority, who would pay rent to the Church for the schools. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman gathers that with the Archbishop this is the main point of difference.

They were both in agreement that while the Upper House considers the Bill on Report, the representatives of the government should maintain their quiescent and merely observant attitude. But the Archbishop promised to inform Sir Henry of any new incident or suggestion, while the latter on his part gave his assurance of the great desire he had for conciliation and arrangement.

On 27th November the King wrote to the Prime Minister in his own hand:

The King has received Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's letter of 27th instant this evening and is greatly interested in hearing the result of his interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, the King deeply regrets to learn, is indisposed.

The King quite sees the difficulty of the position of his government and that of the Primate—but from the last paragraph of the Prime Minister's letter the King is glad to learn from Sir Henry's evident wish, that an arrangement may yet be possible which would prevent a collision between the two Houses of Parliament.

But in spite of all the King's endeavours to find some means by which an arrangement might be secured and a conflict between the two Houses avoided, the tension over the Education Bill grew. The House of Lords regarded it as its right and duty to stem the Radical progress and made the most drastic alterations in the Bill. Lord Crewe, the Liberal leader in the House of Lords, warned the opposition that persistence in many of their amendments practically destroyed the Bill, but the Conservative Lords, led by Lord Lansdowne, were unmoved by the warning, and in its reconstituted shape the Bill passed its third reading by 105 votes to 28 on 6th December.

A bitter conflict between the two Houses followed. On 8th December the Prime Minister pointed out to the King the difficult procedure which would be required in order to deal with the numerous amendments of the Lords, remarking that they would have to be rejected almost *en bloc* if the Bill were to be restored to anything like its original shape. The King in reply (December 9) confessed

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that he does not quite see where the spirit of concession "comes in" in the proposals of the cabinet, and he is afraid from what Sir Henry says that the chances of a compromise are not very bright. He moreover doubts whether the adoption of so drastic and novel a measure as the rejection *en bloc* of the whole of the amendments of the House of Lords will be regarded by them as a desire on the part of the House of Commons to arrive at an amicable conclusion.

Sir Henry says that the Minister for Education must in the first place make a full general statement of the case in the House of Commons to-morrow, and possibly indicate the provisions in which some moderate concessions, quite vaguely described, might be considered. He adds that these indications cannot be made at all unless the government have reason to believe they will be accepted as the price of the rejection of all the other amendments!

The King does not, however, understand how the government is to know whether they will or will not be accepted by the opposition unless the cabinet put themselves into communication with Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Balfour, previous to Mr. Birrell's speech. Sir Henry may already have done so, but he makes no allusion to this point in his letter, and should the King be correct in his surmise, he hopes that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman will arrange a meeting with them before the commencement of the Debate.

Campbell-Bannerman replied that Lord Crewe and Mr. Asquith had already seen Lord Lansdowne, but that Lord Lansdowne had "reserved judgement." He pointed out that the government had a strong wish to save the Bill. The letter did not seem quite satisfactory to the King, and he reiterated his standpoint in his reply (December 10):

The King desired me to thank you for your prompt reply to his letter and to say that his only wish is that there should be peace, as he views with apprehension the failure to arrive at a compromise in view of the consequence which may ensue from the lack of one.

Well indeed might the King view with apprehension the failure to arrive at a compromise, for the Lords' rejection of the Education Bill was the first drop in the cup of exasperation which was offered to the Liberal party, and the result was a fierce attack on the House of Lords which inevitably challenged the hereditary principle.

On 13th December the Commons disagreed with the Lords' amendments *en bloc*, and flung them back to the second chamber. On the 17th the Lords adopted Lord Lansdowne's motion that "the Lords do insist on their amendments." Tremendous efforts were now made by the more moderate leaders in both camps to reach a compromise, but though the Liberals gave way on several points, the Lords were adamant. On 18th December Campbell-Bannerman wrote to the King of the unfavourable issue of the negotiations, and added the comment that "the cabinet cannot hope to save the Bill." Two days later the Prime Minister moved that consideration of the Lords' amendments should not be proceeded with, and the passage of this motion without opposition brought the Bill to its death. Parliament was prorogued on 21st December.

The King had striven to the maximum of his power to avoid the deadlock, but the breach between the two Houses was too wide to be bridged. As Lord Lansdowne wrote on 20th December: "Crewe and his colleagues felt that they had already gone further than their supporters wished, and would not budge another inch." The King's efforts at conciliation had failed, a failure which he deeply regretted. Thenceforth for the rest of the reign the crying issue in domestic politics was the place of the hereditary House of Lords in the Constitution and its relations with the elected House of Commons—an issue that threatened at every turn to involve the Crown.

IX

Like Queen Victoria, King Edward viewed with approval the hereditary principle, but he disliked the idea of warfare between the two Houses which might bring into undesirable prominence the inconsistencies which were inherent in the British Constitution. His firm faith in the virtue of conciliation, and his impatience with merely party considerations, led him to deprecate the exercise by the permanent Tory majority in the House of Lords of its full powers. Suggestions for the reform of the House of Lords provoked differences within the ranks of both parties which rendered an amicable settlement barely possible. On the Liberal side the left wing urged the total abolition of the Upper House and the conversion of Parliament into a single elective

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Chamber; a more moderate section favoured the conversion of the House of Lords into an elective Senate, with or without the admixture of some part of the existing hereditary element; and while the bulk of the Conservative party disliked any change, an active minority urged a drastic reduction of the hereditary element and the admission of some elective element.

The Prime Minister, who was personally inclined to extreme measures, saw that it was impossible to unite his party on a scheme of reform and therefore deemed it politic to evade that part of the problem, and the King's speech from the throne on 12th February 1907 deftly defined the cabinet's attitude in the words: "Serious questions affecting the working of our Parliamentary system have arisen from unfortunate differences between the two Houses. My Ministers have this important subject under consideration with a view to a solution of the difficulty." "The solution of the difficulty," as Campbell-Bannerman saw it, was the reduction of the veto of the House of Lords. During the session of 1907, however, the government contented itself with a modest programme of reform, their chief measures being a Licensing Bill and an Irish Councils Bill, details of which were sent to the King on 13th March 1907.

Meanwhile the cabinet had appointed a committee to consider the question of the House of Lords, and the King's anxiety to learn its proposals was not gratified. At the King's wish Lord Knollys wrote to the Prime Minister (March 24) of the King's

regret that no information should have been given him respecting the proceedings of the Committee on the House of Lords. He says that the question is one of a grave constitutional character and that he should therefore be kept *au courant* with what goes on at the Committee, and further that he should be consulted before any recommendations are approved of by the Cabinet. . . .

That day the King wrote to Knollys:

As regards House of Lords, I do not fancy anything can be done before Easter, nor do I imagine there is any immediate hurry. It would be a difficult matter to correspond with Prime Minister abroad, so it had better stand over till my return home. . . .

Throughout the following months the tension between the two Houses grew. Every step in the controversy was now fully

reported by Campbell-Bannerman to the King, who watched with concern the development of the constitutional struggle. The Prime Minister made amends for his previous reticence by sending fuller reports, not only of the proceedings of the House of Lords Committee, but also of the progress of the Channel Tunnel scheme and the agitation for Female Suffrage, both of which attracted the King's attention.

A Bill for the promotion of the Channel Tunnel scheme was introduced into Parliament towards the end of 1906, but the project aroused much opposition both in governmental and naval circles. The King himself was strongly opposed to the project, and read with keen approval Sir John Fisher's antagonistic opinions and articles to like effect in *The Times*, noting that "Fisher's article is excellent, and so is one in *The Times* of Thursday. Mr. Balfour told me the Bill would never pass the House of Commons" On 20th February 1907 Campbell-Bannerman briefly reported to the King that the cabinet were against the Bill, but were treating it as an open question, and a fortnight later another account of the Cabinet Council was sent which contained even less information. On receiving this second report at the Hotel du Palais, Biarritz, 12th March 1907, the King wrote on it for Knollys's guidance in answering :

I should have hardly thought it worth Prime Minister's while to send enclosed account of Cabinet Council, which gives no information at all. I am disgusted at his article in the *Nation* [1] and his backing up the Women's Franchise Bill. Both are unnecessary and the matter very undigested. I suppose he will support the Channel Tunnel Bill next week !

But on 21st March Lord Crewe in the Lords and the Prime Minister in the Commons stated that the government opposed the Channel Tunnel on the grounds that, even supposing military dangers were met, there would be a feeling of insecurity calling for increased military and naval expenditure. The government's decision pleased the King, who wrote to Knollys on 24th March .

[1] The first number of *The Nation*, which absorbed *The Speaker* and was designed to unite all sections of the Liberal party, appeared on 2nd March 1907 The Prime Minister contributed an article urging that it would be opportune for Great Britain at the coming Hague Conference to raise the question of "arrest of armaments." He believed that the principles of peace and arbitration were making headway, and was sanguine that Britain's naval preponderance did not excite jealousy anywhere.

I am glad that the Prime Minister spoke firmly about the Channel Tunnel. The proceedings in House of Commons are not very edifying, the all-night sitting on Haldane's Army Bill, etc. It seems, however, to agree with the latter. There is a nasty and unfair article in the *Standard* of the 19th about Fisher and meant to do mischief. I daresay it emanates from A. Forster. I quite understand your mem. about S. Holland. I think I remember the Queen speaking to me on the subject some time ago, and I fancy Holland urged her to support him in his company. We are having most glorious weather and make long excursions. Fisher is expected here on Sunday eve.

Five days later the King wrote to Sir Henry from Biarritz :

I rejoice to see that you " put your foot down " regarding the Channel Tunnel when the matter was put forward in the House of Commons. I only wish you could have done the same regarding Female Suffrage. The conduct of the so-called " Suffragettes " has really been so outrageous and does their cause (for which I have no sympathy) much harm.

Throughout that spring and the remainder of the year the extreme supporters of the Suffragette movement continued their militant policy, and in the autumn of 1907 attempts were made in all parts of the country to disturb political meetings addressed by members of the government. These activities increased the King's opposition to the extension of feminine influence, and it was with considerable pleasure that on Leap Year's day 1908 he read that the Women's Enfranchisement Bill had been talked out on its second reading the evening before in the House of Commons.

X

Throughout the early years of the Liberal zenith, the King was as active as ever in his suggestions for appointments and honours, and on more than one occasion had a distinct brush with the Prime Minister when rival candidates were suggested, but always the King deferred to the final choice of his principal minister.

The death on 23rd March 1907 of the Earl of Liverpool, whom the King described as " a kind and amiable man," left vacant the important office in the King's household of Lord Steward. It was a political post, but the King was desirous of filling the

vacancy with a personal friend of old standing—Lord Farquhar, the Master of the Household, who had been acting for Lord Liverpool during the preceding three months. He was a man of business aptitude, who had identified himself politically with the Liberal-Unionists "Should you feel inclined," the King wrote to the Prime Minister on 28th March 1907, "to recommend him to me for the post, he would, of course, have no more politics or ever vote against the government. To have a stranger in that position would certainly not be at all congenial to me." Campbell-Bannerman, however, took the contrary view that the Lord Steward should be "a suitable peer who is a supporter of the government," and declined to accept Lord Farquhar. On 5th April the King suggested to the Prime Minister that Farquhar should continue as "acting Lord Steward" for the time. "I may mention," the King added, "that he is perfectly ready to undertake the duties of Lord Steward without receiving any salary." But, salary or no salary, Campbell-Bannerman was adamant in his objections to Farquhar, and on 22nd July proposed Lord Beauchamp for the Lord Stewardship The King agreed, and on 31st July Beauchamp was appointed.[1]

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Six weeks earlier, on 19th June 1907, the King strongly recommended the bestowal of knighthoods on four artists. His autograph note to Campbell-Bannerman ran:

I strongly recommend the following R.A.'s for knighthood.
C. A. Abbey (who painted Coronation Picture).
H. von Herkomer (who instituted a school for artists).
W. Q. Orchardson (who painted Queen Victoria and Four Generations).
J. S. Sargent (the most distinguished portrait painter in England).
Should four be considered too many, two might be made on 29th June and two more on 9th November.

But both Abbey and Sargent were of American nationality, and only Herkomer and Orchardson received the suggested honour.

The King also urged at the same time that a baronetcy should

[1] Lord Farquhar ceased to be Master of the Household in 1907, and was succeeded by Sir Charles Frederick, previously Deputy-Master. Farquhar then became an extra lord-in-waiting and a Privy Councillor.

be conferred on Mr. Walter Scott, a wealthy octogenarian contractor and manufacturer of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

"MY DEAR SIR HENRY," he wrote, "I enclose the services of Mr. Walter Scott concerning whom I spoke to you to-day. When I have the pleasure of seeing you next Monday I should be glad if you included his name with your list of proposed 'Honours' for a baronetcy. He has been highly recommended —is not a politician—and is upwards of 80 years of age.—Believe me, Very sincerely yours, EDWARD R."

The honour was conferred on the octogenarian who was "not a politician." He lived to enjoy it for three years only.

In the same month (June 1907) Campbell-Bannerman suggested to the King that Mr. E. R. Lankester, the eminent zoologist, should be appointed a K.C.B., but the King objected on the grounds that Lankester had been dismissed from the Natural History Museum and that he had not previously been made a C.B. When, however, the King heard that Lankester had been informed of the proposed honour he at once withdrew his opposition.

The King's early approval of the bestowal of orders and honours by foreign sovereigns on British subjects had by now undergone a change. In 1907, when Prince Arthur of Connaught represented the King at the baptism of the Prince of Asturias, King Alfonso asked Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the British Ambassador to Madrid, for English decorations for his officers and offered to give many Spanish decorations in return. Bunsen replied that great discrimination was used in England regarding decorations and promptly wrote to King Edward, who commented:

Bunsen's answer to the King was quite right, and I hate showering decorations in the way foreign sovereigns, especially the German Emperor, do. However, as the King has made such a point of the matter, I must try and meet his wishes as an exception. Let me have the list which Bunsen mentions.

The King still retained his keen interest in the bestowal of British decorations, and continued to exercise the closest supervision of the orders over which he had supreme control—the Order of Merit, the Royal Victorian Chain, and the Royal Victorian Order. In June 1907 the King suggested to Sir Charles Hardinge

that the Royal Victorian Chain rendered vacant by the King of Denmark's death [1] might be given to the King of Siam, who was shortly expected in England,[2] but inquiry elicited the fact that the Siamese King had confused the Royal Victorian Chain with the Royal Victorian Order and would accept nothing less than the Garter, which he urged had been given to the late Shah and the Mikado. To this proposal Sir Edward Grey strenuously objected He pointed out through Sir Charles Hardinge (June 6, 1907) that it was the most select order of knighthood in existence.

"It was inevitable," Sir Charles wrote, "that the Garter should be given to the Emperor of Japan (as it was in 1906) as he is our Ally, but there is no reason for giving a Christian order of this kind to any other Asiatic ruler Most people, I think, agree that it was a great mistake to have given the Garter to the late Shah of Persia, but we all know how that took place Now that the Shah is dead and no Asiatic sovereign has the Garter except the Emperor of Japan, our ally, why perpetuate the mistake that was made by giving the Garter to the King of Siam and thus open the door to similar claims from Oriental potentates such as the present Shah and Ameer of Afghanistan ? . . .

"If the Garter is given to the King of Siam, the value of that given to the Emperor of Japan, of which the significance has been taught in every school throughout Japan, will inevitably be depreciated, and it will no longer be regarded as an unique honour, which at present it undoubtedly is."

The King agreed with the Foreign Secretary. In the event the King of Siam was not offered the Garter and would not accept the Royal Victorian Chain; and he left England empty-handed for the continent, where he fared better.

A year later the King offered the vacant Royal Victorian Chain to Gustavus V., King of Sweden, who accepted (April 1908), and in the following month Armand Fallières, President of the French Republic, was added to the distinguished list of wearers.

[1] On 29th January 1906 Queen Alexandra's father, King Christian IX. of Denmark, died suddenly of heart failure at the venerable age of 87. King Edward did not accompany Queen Alexandra to Denmark for the funeral, although both he and the Prince of Wales attended a memorial service at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on 18th February.

[2] King Chulalongkorn was the guest of King Edward on 23rd and 24th June 1907 at Windsor and remained in London at the Siamese Legation till the end of the month. Subsequently he visited the French President in Paris, the Kaiser in Berlin, and the King of Italy at Messina.

XI

The King's keen interest in Irish affairs did not slacken with the advent of the Liberal government, though he was inclined to doubt the statesmanship of Lord Aberdeen, the new Lord-Lieutenant, who, he thought, identified himself too closely with the Nationalist party and was inadequately resolute in dealing with outrages or defiance of the law. As his reign neared its close King Edward had many occasions for criticism of Lord Aberdeen's actions, and deemed him lacking in dignity.

There had long been rumours that the arrangements at the Aberdeens' household were rather unorthodox, and years earlier Queen Victoria had requested Lord Rosebery, then Prime Minister, to ascertain whether it was a fact that, while occupying the position of Governor-General of Canada, Lord Aberdeen, with his wife, family, and staff, dined in the servants' hall once a week! Although Lady Aberdeen gave Lord Rosebery the necessary information as to the strictly orthodox character of their household arrangements, whereby he was enabled to reassure her Majesty on the subject, King Edward, soon after he ascended the throne, heard similar stories so often that he, too, instituted inquiries. The King was assured that all the Viceregal dinners and parties were carried out "all in the most correct manner according to procedure and under the Chamberlain's rigid directions," and that their effort to establish human relations between themselves and their servants went no further than their assembling together daily for family worship, and their joint participation in social evenings of the Haddo House Club, at which Lord Aberdeen, for instance, would lecture on "Railways and Railway Work," and his valet would sing "Will o' the Wisp," while an odd man attached to the estate would recite "Caught in his own Trap." To this educational club both Professor James Bryce, M.P., and Professor Henry Drummond lectured.

On 31st May 1907 the Lord-Lieutenant urged a royal visit to Ireland, adding that there might be some difficulty about staying in Viceregal Lodge. The King acquiesced in the curt autograph note: "All right. I look on it as a settled matter that we live on board the yacht." The King and Queen, with Princess Victoria, arrived at Kingstown in the royal yacht *Victoria and*

Albert on 10th July 1907, and visited the Dublin International Exhibition which had been opened on 4th May. They received addresses at the Viceregal Lodge, and were present at Leopardstown races As usual, the King and Queen received in Ireland a cordial popular welcome, in spite of an unpromising turn in Irish politics.[1] For the King, however, the visit was marred by a most unfortunate occurrence which considerably annoyed him. Four days before the King's arrival in Ireland the startling discovery was made that the state jewels of the Order of St. Patrick, including the Diamond Star of the Grand Master, had been missing since 11th June from a safe in the Office of Arms at Dublin Castle. It was clear that the theft had been committed in mysterious circumstances, which were never explained, and it was suspected that the thief was in some way or other connected with the Herald's Office. The King was in Dublin when he learnt the particulars of the theft, and his language on that occasion was vigorous and forceful, partly for reason that in the particular circumstances he could do nothing, and partly because of the feeble efforts that were being made to elucidate the mystery. Nor was his righteous anger minimised on his return to England by the dilatory methods with which the Irish government pursued its early inquiries Lord Aberdeen wrote to the King in August concerning the steps that were being taken to trace the thief, and adding that a reward of £1000 was offered for the recovery of the jewels. Lord Knollys replied (August 26, 1907):

I forwarded to the King your letter respecting the robbery at Dublin Castle and I have just got it back.

He is not, I am afraid, satisfied with your explanation and he desires me to let you know that there is a mystery and an apparent lukewarmness about the inquiry, and in fact the whole of the proceedings, which he does not understand He says that at the end of nearly two months, surely, if there is ever to be a clue, it must have been discovered by this time.

His Majesty also says that somebody must have been careless in their custody of these Crown Jewels, and if so he would be glad to know who, and whether, whoever it may be, anything in the way of punishment or reprimand has been given to him.

[1] In that year (1907) the Sinn Fein party was born and three members of Parliament seceded to the new movement. Labour riots occurred at Belfast, and cattle-driving continued in the south of Ireland.

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On 17th September the King pointed out to Aberdeen that the inquiry was not being pushed forward vigorously, and he desired that Sir Arthur Vicars, who as Ulster King-of-Arms was responsible for the custody of the regalia, should be suspended from his office. At the same time he invited Lord Aberdeen to Balmoral for 24th September so that he might learn more "about this disagreeable business." The interview could not have been pleasant for Aberdeen, who, after his return to Dublin, informed the King that Sir Arthur Vicars with his three assistants, Shackleton, Goldney, and O'Mahoney, had been asked to resign. Sir Arthur Vicars now wrote direct to the King, asking him to look personally into the case. The King replied that the appeal must be made to the official authorities. At the same time Aberdeen asked the King to authorise the inquiry and the King's minute ran, "I have no alternative but to agree to his proposals."

Nothing, however, was done for a month or two, and on 4th December 1907, Lord Knollys wrote to Aberdeen that the "King was complaining of the affair dragging on for five months," and that the King now "washed his hands of the whole affair."

On 6th January a commission was appointed to investigate the matter, but Vicars and his counsel refused to take part on the grounds that the proceedings were to be held in private and that witnesses were not to be held on oath or compelled to attend. The King promptly insisted that the "inquiry *re* Vicars should be in public," and the commission was accordingly so held. The commission eventually reported that Vicars had not exercised due care and vigilance in the custody of the key of the safe, although there was no evidence against any one. As a result of the finding, Vicars was removed from his post on 31st January 1908, and was succeeded by Major (now Sir) Nevile Wilkinson. Mr. Asquith, who now took up the matter of the missing jewels, had as little success as Lord Aberdeen. He could only report in March that they had not been recovered, and that no increase in the amount of the reward could be considered. The whole episode showed extreme incapacity on the part of the Irish government. Neither the Irish Secretary, Mr. Birrell, nor the Under-Secretary, Sir Antony MacDonnell, nor, above all, the Lord-Lieutenant, came well out of the matter. The King's anger was fully justified.

XII

In the autumn of 1907 public interest was largely absorbed by a formidable agitation among railway employees for better wages, shorter hours, and the recognition of their unions by the directors. Throughout October negotiations between the men and the directors brought about a deadlock, and both sides prepared for a strike Mr. Lloyd George, President of the Board of Trade, met the grave situation by conciliatory appeals to both sides. The Prime Minister reported to the King on 5th November that the chances of a settlement were promising, and late next evening the directors and the railwaymen's unions agreed to accept a scheme of conciliation and arbitration which Mr. Lloyd George had devised, to run for six years and to be terminable thereafter on twelve months' notice from either side.

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The Prime Minister forwarded the terms of the settlement immediately by special messenger to the King at Sandringham, adding (November 6, 1907) that

> the country is largely indebted for so blessed a conclusion of a time of great anxiety and danger to the knowledge, skill, astuteness, and tact of the President of the Board of Trade and those around him in his Department.

The King, who could appreciate good work even on the part of one who was a thorn in his side, replied (November 7, 1907):

> MY DEAR SIR HENRY—I am most grateful to you for having sent me down a special messenger last night with your letter of 6th inst., enclosing Mr. Lloyd George's memo. relative to the negotiations he has been conducting between the Railway Directors and Railwaymen.
>
> I have taken the greatest interest in the whole question, which is one of grave importance, and I rejoice to hear that the President of the Board of Trade has shown such cleverness in bringing matters to a successful issue.
>
> It is indeed a matter for congratulation!—Believe me, very sincerely yours, EDWARD R.

XIII

Meanwhile the tension between the two Houses of Parliament had not diminished: constitutional clashes seemed rather to

become more frequent. The question not unnaturally had the full attention of the government, and their deliberation terminated in a decision that seemed directly to challenge the veto of the House of Lords. On 24th June 1907 the Prime Minister proposed a resolution, which was to precede a Bill, declaring that the power of the House of Lords to alter or reject Bills which the Commons had passed "must be so restricted by law as to secure that within the limits of a single Parliament the final decision of the Commons should prevail." The resolution was carried in the Commons by 432 votes to 147 on 26th June, but for the time nothing further followed.

In spite of the adverse resolution of the Commons, the House of Lords was unyielding. Two Bills which the House of Commons passed towards the end of this session, the Small Holdings (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, offended the susceptibilities both of Scottish landlords and of the House of Lords. The Conservative opposition in the House of Lords announced their intention, on 21st August, of so drastically altering the former Bill that the government next day intimated their intention of dropping it and of reintroducing it the next session. The Land Values (Scotland) Bill was negatived on second reading in the House of Lords by 118 votes to 31 on 26th August.

Other Bills, which had passed the House of Commons and were amended in the House of Lords, became law by means of compromise. When the Prime Minister submitted, 8th August, his draft of the King's speech from the throne to be spoken at the prorogation of Parliament, he included a paragraph of regret at the treatment to which the House of Lords had subjected the abandoned Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill. The paragraph ran thus:

> I regret that, notwithstanding the laborious consideration given to the Small Landholders Bill for Scotland, which was designed to meet the needs and desires of the Scotch people, this measure has failed to pass into law.

The King deemed it superfluous to mention so specifically a Bill that the House of Lords had failed to pass, considering it a "covered thrust," and he resented any expression of his personal regret. If, however, the Prime Minister insisted in retaining the offending statement, he made his agreement to such a course

subject to the deletion of the first nine words. He re-wrote the paragraph in his own hand thus :

The Small Landholders Bill for Scotland, which was designed to meet the needs and desires of the Scotch people, had failed to pass into law.

At first the government accepted the King's emendation, but ultimately the ministers came to a unanimous decision to adopt the King's first suggestion to omit the paragraph altogether, and on 28th August, when the Lord Chancellor read the King's speech in the House of Lords proroguing the session, no mention was made of the Small Landholders Bill, nor was any reference made to the conflict between the two Houses. But the deletion of a sentence could not stem the rising tide of Radical fury against the House of Lords, and it was now becoming evident that only a miracle or a national crisis of the first dimension could prevent the inevitable clash between the two legislative chambers.

CHAPTER XX

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

I

1905 — Ætat. 63

THE difficulties that had to be faced by the Liberal government that came into office in December 1905 were by no means simplified by their determination to bring to an end the importation of Chinese labour into South Africa, to grant the Transvaal a representative Constitution, and eventually to federate the South African Colonies into one homogeneous whole. All three steps required very cautious handling, but Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had been in office barely a fortnight when he announced at the Albert Hall on 21st December 1905 that the government had decided to stop the importation of Chinese coolies into South Africa. The King, who had been enthusiastically in favour of the system of indentured Chinese labour, viewed the government's decision with dismay and remarked pointedly that the government ought not to have taken such a drastic step until Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner of South Africa, had been consulted.

With Lord Selborne, who had replaced Lord Milner in February 1905,[1] the King was on cordial terms, and Lord Selborne's frequent letters to the King are of more than ordinary

[1] At the time of Selborne's appointment the King had suggested that he should go out with the title of Governor-General instead of High Commissioner, but Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, argued that this was impossible, as the various colonies were not yet federated.

Nine months later the question was again referred to by the King, when his brother, the Duke of Connaught, was about to visit South Africa. Selborne was anxious to know if the Duke would take precedence of him, and the King instructed Knollys to reply (December 1) that "as you are not a Viceroy or a Governor-General (though he thinks you *ought* to be the latter) he thinks that as High Commissioner you should give precedence to the Duke of Connaught." By the Federation Act of 31st May 1910 a Governor-General was instituted.

interest. On 25th June 1905, for instance, he sent a delightful descriptive account of the state of affairs in South Africa, and paid high tributes to the Lieutenant-Governors of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony (Sir Arthur Lawley and Sir H. J. Goold-Adams). Finally, he suggested that the King should present his portrait to the Grey University College, Bloemfontein.

To this the King made reply (July 28) through Lord Knollys :

The King thanks you for your letter of the 25th of June, and is greatly interested by the account of your impressions respecting state of affairs in South Africa.

He is afraid you have a most difficult task before you, but he has every hope you will succeed, and he is sure that you are right in the attitude which you propose to adopt in regard to the Boers.

He is glad to hear what you say respecting the two Lieutenants, and it must be an immense advantage to have in your two immediate subordinates men whom you can thoroughly trust

The King will be very glad to give his portrait to the Grey College, and I will try and send it out to you next week.

An opportunity was given to the King to express his displeasure at the government's decision to prohibit the importation of Chinese coolies into South Africa, when Lord Elgin, the new Colonial Secretary, forwarded a dispatch to Lord Selborne ordering the suspension of the Chinese Labour Ordinance "pending a decision as to the grant of a responsible government to the Colony," and giving instructions that Chinese immigration was to be stopped, "as far as it is practical to do it forthwith." Lord Elgin omitted to submit the dispatch to the King, which brought the rebuke :

"The King commands me to say," Lord Knollys wrote on 22nd December, "that he has seen with surprise the publication in the papers this morning of a very important telegram from you to Lord Selborne, which was dispatched without its having been previously submitted to him.

"His Majesty directs me to point out to you that it is his constitutional right to have all dispatches of any importance, especially those initiating or relating to a change of policy, laid before him prior to it being finally decided upon. This 'right' was always observed during Queen Victoria's reign, and likewise by the late government since the King succeeded to the Throne.

"In calling your attention to this matter, His Majesty feels

sure that the omission was simply due to inadvertence on your part.

"The King desires me, before concluding, to express his regret that a reversal (for such it will be regarded) of the policy of Lord Milner and Lord Selborne should have been decided upon after so short an experience of office, without in the first instance communicating privately with Lord Selborne, as he fears it is not unlikely to lead to the resignation of Lord Selborne and to grave results in South Africa."

A ministerial apology followed. Henceforward, though other ministers offended, Lord Elgin was always careful to keep the King informed of any important steps.

In spite of the King's fear that "a reversal of the policy of Lord Milner" would lead to "grave results in South Africa," the Liberal government persevered with this policy, happily without the disastrous results the King predicted. On 14th June 1907 the Transvaal Parliament brought the arrangement to an end, and the Chinese immigrants were gradually repatriated, the last batch leaving the Rand on 28th February 1910.

II

Early in February 1906 the new Liberal cabinet adopted a scheme of responsible government for the Transvaal and resolved to send out a Commissioner to determine the details. The King, who had been kept well informed by the Prime Minister, was somewhat nervous of the result, but made no definite protest.

As soon as Parliament met, Lord Milner, who had not before spoken in the House of Lords, raised a vigorous discussion as to the wisdom of the new policy. He thereby drew upon himself the fire of the government supporters in the House of Commons and on 24th March a direct vote of censure was proposed on his South African administration. After a heated debate the motion was negatived, but an amendment qualifying the terms of the original motion, which had been vigorously moved by Mr. Winston Churchill, was adopted by 355 votes to 135. Notice was at once given in the House of Lords by Lord Halifax of a rebutting resolution in Lord Milner's favour. The Prime Minister (March 26), in reporting these proceedings to the King, professed an

anxiety to curb party rancour in the matter, but partly attributed its recent display to "Lord Milner's intemperate speech in the House of Lords a short time ago." The King disagreed with Campbell-Bannerman's inference.

"I cannot consider," he wrote from Biarritz, "Lord Milner's speech in the House of Lords was intemperate. If it was, what were Mr. W. S. Churchill's speeches in the House of Commons?"

Two days later he wrote to Lady Londonderry:

I admit I quite share your views concerning certain proceedings in House of Commons, and the conduct of a certain relation of yours is simply scandalous. It is indeed hard on Lord Milner to be treated in such a manner. Alas! nowadays, party comes before country.

The political attack on Lord Milner offended the King. He had resented Lord Milner's refusal of the Colonial Secretaryship in 1903 and had not sought his society since. But now he renewed his old intercourse and invited him to Windsor, where he spoke to him with impatience of the House of Commons' action. But the King was gratified by Lord Halifax's persistence in triumphantly inducing the House of Lords to adopt his resolution approving Lord Milner's South African policy.

The King's attitude was identical with that which he assumed some twenty-three years before in the case of Sir Bartle Frere, whose rule in South Africa was similarly impugned on the entry into office of a Liberal government.

Throughout the Milner controversy, and during the whole course of subsequent events in South Africa, the King was in direct correspondence with those who knew South Africa most intimately. Not only did Lord Selborne and Lord Milner write to him frequently, but Mr. Winston Churchill, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, who had been a press correspondent during the Boer war, and Sir Francis Hopwood, the Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade, added their quota to the King's information. On 15th August 1906 Mr. Churchill wrote at length from Deauville regarding the proposed Transvaal Constitution, fully thrashing out the question of the advantages of full responsible government over Lyttelton's proposal of "half and half." The King, who was at Marienbad, instructed Major Frederick Ponsonby to reply (August 20):

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The King desires me to thank you for your letter which he read with the greatest interest, and to tell you that he is glad to see what importance you attach to matters relating to South Africa.

His Majesty sincerely hopes that the sanguine hopes you express with reference to the future of the Transvaal may be realised, but at the same time he trusts that in dealing with all abstract questions regarding the self-government of a mixed community, you will never lose sight of the fact that the Transvaal is a recently conquered country.

The King quite understands that the granting of self-government to the Transvaal was unavoidable; but in solving the many difficult problems in South Africa, it might be dangerous to assume that the Transvaal is simply a colony desirous of self-government like any other in His Majesty's Dominions; and the King knows you will agree with him in thinking that it would be deplorable to run the risk of having another war in South Africa or of losing this Colony where we have spent so much blood and money.

It is impossible for the King to enter into details on all the points you raise in your letter, but so long as you bear this in mind and are careful to maintain British supremacy, you may rest assured that any measures His Government may take for the welfare of South Africa will receive His Majesty's approval.

The King was glad to see that the government had decided to postpone the granting of self-government to the Orange River Colony until the end of next year, and considers it most desirable that we should first see how the Transvaal Constitution works before embarking on another venture.

There is one point on which the King would be glad to hear your opinion, and that is: what will be the eventual outcome of the Transvaal Constitution? Will the English majority increase or diminish? Will the measures now adopted tend to increase immigration from England or will they have the effect of choking off would-be immigrants? The King can well understand that the onus of all these discussions in Parliament was thrown upon your shoulders, and no doubt severe criticisms were made from both extremes, but His Majesty is glad to see that you are becoming a *reliable* minister and above all a serious politician, *which can only be attained by putting country before party.*[1]

Churchill replied (August 26) with a lengthy epistle of thirteen quarto pages, the tenor of which was to prove that transition from a Crown Colony to responsible government was good for

[1] The whole of the last sentence was written on the draft by the King himself.

British emigrations. The lucubration was probably too much for the King, who appears to have made no comment.

Again, on 2nd November 1906, Mr. Winston Churchill suggested that the King should see Sir Richard Solomon, the acting Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal, then on a visit to England, who would probably become the first Prime Minister in the new Transvaal government[1] The King approved of the suggestion and invited Sir Richard to stay with him at Sandringham on the 11th November

A few days later (November 15, 1906) Lord Elgin submitted for the King's signature the letters patent granting responsible government to the Transvaal. The grant of self-government made necessary a general election in South Africa, and the first returns in February 1907 gave the Boer candidates a substantial majority. The unexpected electoral defeat of Sir Richard Solomon resulted in a summons to General Botha, leader of the Het Volk (Boer) party, to form a ministry. General Smuts became Colonial Secretary, and the ministerial benches were said to be "almost an exact replica of the staff of the burgher army." Lord Selborne sent the King a full account of the first elections on 4th March, and on 23rd March wrote at length of Botha's political position :

"General Botha," he wrote, "is undoubtedly a strong character and a born leader of men, with a shrewd knowledge of human nature and plenty of common sense. He has also plenty of moral courage, of which his very outspoken announcement of his loyalty to Your Majesty's Throne and Person is witness. . . . He is a man of natural dignity of manner and reserved. He does not wear his heart on his sleeve, and he will not go enthusing with English radicals, whom, being a great Tory by nature (as all Boers are), he will probably dislike. He understands English perfectly and can converse in the language quite well, although every now and then he is puzzled to find a word or phrase. He never makes speeches in English, and it is open to doubt if he could do so with real satisfaction to himself. There are of course also political reasons why he always speaks in Dutch. He must be careful to remain a Boer in the eyes and

[1] But Mr Churchill, in predicting the high office of Prime Minister for Solomon, did not reckon with the Boer voters, for Solomon was defeated in the forthcoming elections He became Agent-General for the Colony in London in 1907, and High Commissioner for South Africa in 1910, which post he held until his death in 1913.

hearts of the people he leads, and on the language question they are very sentimental.

"His tastes are those of a country gentleman. . . . He is a very keen and prosperous farmer and possesses very fine stocks—principally Merino sheep and Friesland cattle: he delights in good horses.

"Mrs. Botha is a very nice woman, and she is sending her daughter in her place under the care of her sister-in-law, General Botha's sister. . . . The daughter is a distinctly attractive young lady, pretty, lively, and well turned out. She was educated at Brussels and, although she has never been to England, speaks English perfectly. Her age is about 19."

To this vivid description of the man who was to play such a large part in Empire politics the King (who was at Naples) added the marginal comment for Lord Knollys' guidance (April 19):

Please thank Lord Selborne very much for his interesting account of General Botha, which I was very glad to have. You might show it to my son, but perhaps *not* to any member of the government. E.R.

To the first letter from Lord Selborne, in which he reviewed the general situation in the Transvaal, the King, who was now at Biarritz, dictated the reply (March 23, 1907):

The King has read with deep interest Lord Selborne's very interesting letter on the South African situation.

The King fully realises the importance of not further reducing the already considerably diminished Force in South Africa, and has already drawn the attention of his Ministers to the question.[1]

[1] As early as November 1904 the King had a suspicion that the War Office was contemplating some such step, but was then informed by Mr. Arnold-Forster that there was "no immediate intention of reducing the number of units of the South African garrison." But by January 1905 the War Office had come to the conclusion that it was desirable, in the interests of economy, to begin the process. The proposal raised grave doubts in the King's mind, especially as he knew that Lord Roberts and Lord Milner viewed "with dismay" any further reduction from what was already an "absolute minimum," and Lord Knollys wrote to Mr. Balfour (January 24):

"I have submitted to the King your letter respecting the South African Garrison question. He desires me to say he is glad to hear that the W.O. dispatch was purely of a tentative character and that it has not been brought before the cabinet. Should it be so, he sincerely trusts that in view of the very strong opinion expressed by Lord Milner and other S. African authorities on the subject, any idea of further reducing the Garrison will be at once abandoned."

With the advent to power of the new Liberal government the proposals for reduction were again renewed, and on 23rd March 1906 the King commented:

"I understand that Mr. Haldane contemplates making many reductions

It is very unfortunate that elections based on Mr. Lyttelton's Registration Scheme of 1905 should have been carried out under Lord Elgin's scheme without change of election registry, as it has given the Het Volk a preponderance of power that must make them practically invincible for some time to come, and which must necessarily increase the Boer prestige, while it proportionally decreases that of the British throughout South Africa.

The sketch Lord Selborne gives of the New Transvaal Cabinet is very interesting. General Botha is undoubtedly the man best capable of being, and suited for, Prime Minister, and if his words are borne out by his actions, his policy with regard to Great Britain should be conciliatory and statesmanlike.

The King met Mr. Hull[1] in Scotland a few years ago and thought him a rough diamond, but was favourably impressed by him.

The presence in the cabinet of a possibly strong anti-British contingent is an undoubted anxiety, but the King hopes that

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of troops in the Colonies, but I hope that he will clearly understand that I cannot give my sanction to the reduction of any garrison in South Africa It is too small as it is, and for training troops the best country which we possess"

A few days later the King received a letter from Sir Henry McCallum, the Governor of Natal, which, after referring in complimentary terms to the successful visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, stressed the need for a redistribution of the garrison The King added the marginal comment (Biarritz, March 30):

"Very interesting and important Mr Haldane should see Sir H McCallum's interesting letter The Duke of Connaught writes in the same strain to me regarding the deplorable paucity of troops. My strong conviction is that the garrisons of S A. and Egypt should be strengthened, not only for political reasons, but because the above-named countries are so admirably adapted to the drilling and manœuvring of troops, as there is so much space The garrisons of Gibraltar and Malta should be denuded of troops as much as possible, in fact, it would be far better if both places were handed over to the Royal Navy and garrisoned by R Marines, and of course a certain force of R A. I should be glad that Mr. Haldane should be acquainted with my views"

Mr Haldane replied (April 4, 1906) that it was "difficult to know where to place troops in South Africa. Natal was ruled out strategically, and the Admiralty will not take over Gibraltar and Malta fortresses." The King added the comment

"I understand his explanation about troops in South Africa. It is no doubt very difficult to know where they should be placed. As General Hildyard (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa, 1905–8) is a very competent man, surely his advice might be taken. As regards Gibraltar and Malta, I should like to know why Admiralty has changed its views."

For the moment the King's strenuous opposition prevented any further reduction of the South African garrison, but in 1908 the question was again raised, and on 26th June the cabinet sanctioned a diminution of South African troops—a step which the King condemned as "a most ill-advised and dangerous proceeding."

[1] Mr. H. C. Hull, Treasurer of the Transvaal.

General Botha's influence, combined with their own good sense, will keep the aspirations and views of his colleagues within proper limits, and that a feeling of common interests may eventually overpower that of "pro-Boer," which has no doubt been predominant up to now with Boer leaders and followers in South Africa.

The non-election of Sir R. Solomon is an undoubted loss, and the King is sorry Lord Selborne is deprived of his services, which would no doubt have been valuable in the formation and work of the new Transvaal Government.

The King cannot help remarking the stress Lord Selborne laid on the abolition of Chinese labour at the opening of the Transvaal Parliament.

Lord Selborne in reply (May 1, 1907) quieted the King's fears that British prestige would decline before the growing prestige of the Boers.

In the meantime General Botha had arrived in London as a representative of South Africa at the Colonial Conference which was held in April 1907. His presence was made the occasion of a national welcome. He arrived on 13th April at Southampton, where he received an address from the mayor and corporation, and received the freedom of the City of London on the 16th, and later of both Manchester and Edinburgh. On 17th April Campbell-Bannerman inquired whether the King would approve of Botha's being made Honorary General of the British Army. The King did not like the idea:

It is a complimentary distinction which has hitherto been reserved for Foreign Sovereigns, and His Majesty is inclined to think that it would be overdone to give this to Botha. . . . It would be a mistake to make Botha too English, and if he accepted this honour it would make the Boers feel he was no longer one of them.

The Prime Minister did not press the matter, and the proposal was dropped,[1] though with the other Colonial Prime Ministers Botha was made a Privy Councillor on 9th May.

On the previous evening the King gave a dinner to the Colonial Premiers. The King, who was in excellent spirits and seemed to have greatly benefited from his recent foreign tour, was particularly gracious to General Botha and had a long conversation

[1] It was revived, however, in the next reign, and the honour was conferred on Botha on 15th August 1912.

with him. No formal speeches were delivered, but the King took advantage of the opportunity to make a graceful toast to the guests from the Dominions. "I cannot leave the room," he said, "without raising my glass to wish prosperity and happiness to my guests, who represent my Dominions beyond the seas. I give a hearty welcome to the distinguished statesmen who are here to-night, and trust they will carry away with them an agreeable impression of the Mother Country I wish them God speed on their voyage home."

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III

Whilst the questions of Chinese labour, a Constitution for the Transvaal, and army reductions were thus exercising the minds of the King and his South African administrators, a fourth question appeared which created no little embarrassment for them. On the surface the problem seemed delightfully easy to solve—in fact no problem at all. On 26th January 1905 the largest diamond in the world was found in the Premier Mine, near Pretoria, and promptly named after the Director of the Company, Mr. T. Cullinan. The next month it was brought to England, and shown to the King at Buckingham Palace on 29th March, who was greatly interested in the unrivalled gem. In 1906 Mr. Cullinan suggested its presentation to the King, and a year later, on 19th August 1907, General Botha gave notice in the Transvaal Legislative Assembly of a motion authorising the government to acquire the Cullinan diamond for presentation to King Edward in token of loyalty of the Transvaal people and in commemoration of the grant of responsible government. The Dutch motion was carried by 42 votes to 19, and the magnificent gift was offered to King Edward. So far no problem had arisen, but with the offer opposition became evident and a strenuous "underground" controversy followed. The absence of unanimity in the Transvaal Assembly, the feeling on the part of the British members that the offer came from the Dutch and not from themselves, made the home government unenthusiastic about the King's acceptance of the jewel.

Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner, in a letter to the King dated 20th August 1907, entirely supported General Botha's action, which he believed to be intended as an unmistakable sign

both to the irreconcilable Dutch in South Africa and to foreign nations that he and his friends had accepted incorporation under the British flag once and for ever. Lord Selborne believed that the gift would have more far-reaching effects than even its originator suspected. He thought that

"the Progressive (British) party in the Transvaal have made a great mistake in opposing the policy of the Transvaal Government in this matter, and he did his best so to persuade them, but without effect. . . . The Progressive minority took the action they did solely from a sense of duty, a mistaken sense in Lord Selborne's judgement, but nevertheless a genuine sense of duty. They spoke and voted with heavy hearts. . . .

"Lord Selborne would, therefore," he continued, "most earnestly urge Your Majesty in your own most gracious words to let it be seen in your reply to the offer of the gift of the 'Cullinan' diamond (which he hopes Your Majesty will graciously accept) that Your Majesty knows full well that those who opposed the gift are true, loyal, and faithful subjects, and that in the action they took they were only actuated by a sense of duty."

At the same time the matter had come before the cabinet, where a painful indecision seemed to prevail. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman wrote to the King on 21st August:

The proposal on the part of the Transvaal Colony to present the great diamond to Your Majesty was brought up, and the general feeling was that it was a matter on which we were hardly entitled to offer any advice to Your Majesty, but that the gift seemed somewhat inopportune at the present moment when a loan is about to be negotiated, and the grace of the act is the less secured by the want of unanimity in the local Parliament. There can be no doubt whatever that the intention is respectful, loyal, and kindly; and the question will be best solved according to Your Majesty's own instincts.

The next day the High Commissioner telegraphed to Winston Churchill urging acceptance, but the latter in forwarding the telegram to the King trusted that

no final decision will be taken by His Majesty in regard to it until the whole facts arrive officially together with the opinion of the High Commissioner, which is on its way. . . . The cabinet takes a very unimaginative view which, in my opinion, does not do full justice either to the significance or to the importance of the event. . . .

The King meanwhile telegraphed from Marienbad to Lord Elgin, the Colonial Secretary:

Am anxious to hear whether Government advise my acceptance of Diamond. Botha, when in London, told my son confidentially he contemplated this. It would never do to snub them. Should be glad to know what Lord Selborne thinks.

Lord Elgin replied that the government were awaiting further information, and that no decision could at present be given, while Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman proved even less helpful by stating (August 22) that "the cabinet did not really want to shirk the responsibility, but he thought that the King's judgement was so good in matters of this sort that they might safely leave it in his hands."

In this welter of indecision there were at least two decisive voices. One was that of the Prince of Wales, who wrote to the King on 25th August: "I hope in the end you will be able to accept it. The Dutch, anyhow, seem most anxious that you should." The other was that of Lord Esher, who opposed acceptance on the ground that "it merely glorifies and enriches Cullinan," and that the Transvaal was too poor to make such a kingly gift.

Two days later the High Commissioner advocated acceptance. and Campbell-Bannerman reported that the cabinet was unanimously of opinion that refusal would be difficult, but that it would be "well to await the receipt of the actual offer and of Lord Selborne's dispatch before tendering their advice to Your Majesty." In the course of a week or two Lord Selborne's dispatches arrived, and the King, who quickly made up his mind to accept the diamond when he knew that this was Lord Selborne's desire, wrote to Lord Selborne (September 20):

The King thanks you for your letters received 15th and 16th. He has made up his mind to accept the diamond, after what you have written on the subject, as soon as it has been officially or formally offered to him by General Botha. He has directed me to inform the Prime Minister that when his acceptance is publicly announced, he wishes it to be at the same time stated that the diamond has been accepted on the recommendation of the Cabinet. . . .

On 19th October the Transvaal government invited the King's acceptance of the diamond "as a token of the loyalty

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and attachment of the people of the Transvaal to His Majesty's person and throne, together with their hearty congratulations on his birthday and best wishes for a long, happy, and peaceful reign," and Lord Selborne telegraphed in the same strain. On 5th November 1907 the cabinet announced its approval of the King's acceptance of the gift, and the King caused the following reply to be sent on 9th November through the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

> The King commands me to desire you to inform your Ministers that he has read with the greatest pleasure the communication received from them, and that he acknowledges with much satisfaction the cordial congratulations and good wishes which it conveys. His Majesty accepts for himself and his successors the valuable gift of the Cullinan diamond as being in the words of your Ministers "a token of the loyalty and attachment of the people of the Transvaal to his throne and person," and he will cause this great and unique diamond to be kept and preserved among the historic jewels which form the heirlooms of the Crown. The King also wishes me to express his warm desire for the welfare and prosperity of the Transvaal.

On the King's sixty-sixth birthday, 9th November 1907, Sir Richard Solomon and Sir Francis Hopwood, on behalf of the people of the Transvaal, presented the Cullinan diamond to the King at Sandringham.[1]

IV

Acute minds both in England and South Africa were now considering the advisability of a Federation in South Africa on

[1] It was then uncut, and in January 1908 was sent to Messrs. Asscher and Company in Amsterdam for cutting, it being arranged that the clippings should be retained as payment for the expenses of cutting. The King took the utmost interest in the process of cutting, and at Marienbad in August 1908 received Alexander Levy, who had made the business arrangements. The uncut stone weighed $3025\frac{3}{4}$ carats, but ultimately it was divided into a number of gems, the largest of which weighed $516\frac{1}{2}$ carats and was appointed for the King's crown, while a second gem weighing $309\frac{3}{16}$ carats was destined for the Queen's crown. Ultimately the cut stones were handed to the King at Sandringham on 9th November 1908, and were eventually placed among the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London.

Some of the smaller gems, and the 96 small brilliants, went to Asscher's in payment for the cutting, and some were acquired by the Transvaal government and presented to Queen Mary, 8th June 1910.

the lines of Australian precedent. Lord Selborne early put his point of view before the King, who replied (August 9, 1907):

The King thanks you for your letter 11th July received yesterday, and for the copy of your memorandum on Federation. He is strongly in favour of Federation in South Africa when the proper moment arrives for carrying out that measure, but he is hardly in a position to say whether the matter is sufficiently ripe. He has always thought that in Australia Federation was carried too soon, and he believes that many people are of the same opinion . . .

In the ensuing proposals for Federation the King took a great interest. He noted with pleasure that instructions had been given on 29th July 1908 to Lord Selborne to reserve to the Imperial government the control of the native protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland, which were then under the direct control of the home government through the High Commissioner. The confidence placed in the King by the native races included in the Empire now received a very interesting illustration. The native chiefs cherished complete faith in the power and justice of the British sovereign, and it was their ambition to place themselves under the direct protection of the Crown. A fear that a new parliamentary régime might prejudice their rights led some of them to petition the King for a personal conference in which to lay before him their misgivings. They wished to be reassured of his personal interest in their welfare. As Lord Crewe wrote to the King on 19th December 1908:

What the Natives think most of is the fact that they are under the King's care, and that His Majesty will look after them. Accordingly, the Basutos, who are an extremely fine people, very happy and prosperous in their mountain country, ask to be received as a deputation here, not because they are alarmed, but to satisfy themselves that their case is being considered. Selborne thinks it absolutely necessary that they should come, and the two other tribes also if they desire it. . . . I hope, therefore, that His Majesty may be pleased to receive them formally, and to make them a reply. . . .

The King warmly consented to receive them, and four Basuto chiefs arrived in February 1909 and presented to the King at Buckingham Palace on the 18th February a petition from the paramount chief of Basutoland with regard to their status under

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the South African Federation. In the event the native protectorates were excluded from the Union, and were placed directly under the Governor-General, much to the satisfaction of the native chiefs.

A few months later the provisions of the Act "to constitute the Union of South Africa" were adopted at the Convention of representatives of the four colonies (Cape, Natal, Orange River Colony, and Transvaal). The draft Constitution having been approved by each of the four legislatures, a delegation from the Convention arrived in London in July, each of the four colonies being represented by the Prime Minister and his chief colleagues. One detail in the proposed Confederation excited criticism. All coloured races of South Africa were excluded from the franchise, but it was hoped that the colour bar would be modified at Westminster. When, however, the Bill for the Union was presented to the British Parliament, it was passed through both Houses as an agreed measure, and received the royal assent without alteration on the 20th September 1909.

V

A month later Lord Selborne announced his resignation, to take place twelve months later, and Mr. Asquith suggested (October 18) the appointment of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, then Home Secretary, to the newly created post of Governor-General—which should not, however, take effect until 1910. The Prime Minister had the impression, when he previously discussed the matter with the King, that the King would agree to the appointment, but he now asked for an intimation of approval before making the formal submission. The King added the autograph comment on the last page of Mr. Asquith's letter:

> Is there nobody better? and has the feeling of the leading people in South Africa been ascertained? Surely the appointment need not yet be settled, as Lord Selborne does not leave for another year.

But Asquith stuck to his nominee, and on 11th December reminded the King that Gladstone's intended appointment ought not to be longer delayed, though he suggested that for the present he should retain the office of Home Secretary in order to avoid

a "very inconvenient reshuffle of the cabinet cards" on the eve of the elections. The King assented. A few days later Mr. Gladstone was announced to be first Governor-General of the Union of South Africa, and the King agreed to create him a Viscount in the following February.

In all his dealings with South African matters the King showed, as on many other occasions, the greatest desire that changes should not be made prematurely, and that the fullest reliance should be placed in the "man on the spot."

CHAPTER XXI

THE CREATION OF THE TERRITORIAL ARMY

I

1906 — Ætat. 64

THE fall of the Conservative government in 1905 and the subsequent Liberal successes at the polls resulted in a change of the civilian head of the War Office—a change that was by no means uncongenial to the King, since Mr. Arnold-Forster was succeeded by Mr. R. B. Haldane. The new Secretary of State for War was almost a newcomer to the King's circle, but his ability, his suavity, and considerate deference soon won for him a way into the inner coterie of the King's friends. Mr. Haldane had barely been in office a week before he asked (December 16) for an audience of the King in order that he might " take the King's pleasure " on " matters of importance under consideration." The King's interest in matters military was as active as ever and in this and subsequent intercourse with Mr. Haldane he discussed wellnigh every point at issue.

Mr. Haldane found himself faced with the problem of an army that was admittedly inefficient, yet with estimates that could not be increased. In the teeth of the Radical section of his party, which was indifferent to military questions and believed in the reduction of the fighting forces, Mr. Haldane determined to reform the army from top to bottom. He was unwilling to believe that Germany, with which he was well acquainted, would suddenly disturb the peace of Europe, but he acknowledged a possibility, and in such an event wanted England to be able to place an efficient expeditionary force into the field and to be able to feed it by means of a " territorial " army. From the

moment of his taking office to the inception and development of his territorial scheme Mr. Haldane found a firm friend, if at times a critical one, in the King, who was as anxious as the Secretary of State for War to see the army at the highest pitch of efficiency.

As of old the King took the greatest interest in army appointments and expressed himself vigorously on the differing qualities of men suggested for the higher posts Two men in particular had won his full confidence in their ability—the first a comparatively unknown Major-General who was afterwards to lead British troops to victory in the Great War of 1914–18; and the second was the already famous hero of Khartoum—Lord Kitchener. Early in 1905, when the King was seriously displeased with the incompetence of a certain General at the War Office, he had requested Mr. Balfour himself to look into the matter and had pressed for the appointment in his place of Major-General Douglas Haig, " an officer whose experience of staff work in the field and whose high abilities should be utilised in this particular branch, where initiative and organising power are at this moment much wanted, however great the loss to India may be of that officer's services." The King, however, was unsuccessful at the moment in his desire to secure for Haig a War Office appointment, but when, six months later (February 1906) the London District Command became vacant the King approved of Mr. Haldane's proposal that it should be offered to Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir Frederick Stopford, who was then Director of Military Training at the War Office, and he was particularly pleased with the War Minister's suggestion that Stopford's promotion " would enable us to bring Douglas Haig from India to General Stopford's place." [1]

Nor was the King's confidence in Lord Kitchener any less evident, and when, in 1907 Lord Kitchener's term of office as Commander-in-Chief in India came to an end and Mr. Morley, the Secretary of State for India, suggested to the King on 16th March that Lord Kitchener's appointment should be extended, as Lord Roberts's had been, for two years, the King, who had opposed Lord Kitchener's original appointment to India, by now realised the value of his reforms, and gave, on 18th March,

[1] Haldane to Knollys, 12th February 1906.

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his entire approval and sanction, and considers that it is of the utmost importance that Lord Kitchener should have the opportunity of continuing the valuable work in which he is engaged for the benefit of the Army of India.

The King would be glad if Mr. Morley would inform Mr. Haldane how desirable it is this arrangement should be carried out.

Two days later he himself wrote to Mr. Haldane urging that Lord Kitchener's term of office should be prolonged "from November next for two years." On 22nd March Haldane agreed to the proposal, and Lord Kitchener's efficient period of rule was extended.

Meanwhile, Mr. Haldane had suggested to the King and the cabinet that a new office, that of Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, whose headquarters should be at Malta, should be established. Such a command would, he urged, form a link in the chain of the defences of the Empire. Much doubt was expressed as to the utility of such an office, but the King, yielding to his minister's argument, thought to give its inauguration every advantage by offering it to his brother, the Duke of Connaught. The Duke accepted it against his own inclinations at the King's persuasion, and on the 8th August 1907 his appointment as Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief and High Commissioner in the Mediterranean was announced, and the duties of the new post were described as mainly concerning inspection, training, and strategy. The Duke soon reported that the command was unnecessary and a mistake—that it was superfluous—a cause of inefficiency in peace and a danger in war, and after two years in the post he became anxious to resign. On 14th July 1909, in an interview with Mr. Asquith, the Duke, who had now been offered the Malta command for the third year, expressed the opinion that the command was "a superfluity," affording no adequate scope for the activities of an officer of his status and experience, and he announced his firm resolution to retire in October. Mr. Asquith reported the interview to the King, who wrote in his own hand from Newmarket on 15th July:

The King has received the Prime Minister's letter of 14th instant, giving an account of his interview with the Duke of

Connaught, relative to the Inspectorship of the Mediterranean with Headquarters at Malta. The King regrets very much to learn that the Duke persists in wishing to be relieved of his duties, but from the Prime Minister's account of the interview, nothing more can be done in the matter. The Duke of Connaught must now consider his military career at an end, and if he does not intend returning to Malta, he should resign his appointment at once and not wait until October as he suggests.

The King is much annoyed at his Brother's persistent obstinacy.

In the event the Duke's resignation was accepted on the 25th July 1909. Mr. Haldane, however, resolutely adhered to his view of the usefulness of the post, on grounds of "high strategy," and it was subsequently offered to Lord Kitchener, who, at the King's strong persuasion, most unwillingly accepted. Just before leaving India, Kitchener had written to a friend:

Mr. Haldane offered me the Mediterranean command, but I refused it. Lord Morley tried pressure, and this I resisted. They brought in the King. He wired me very strongly urging my acceptance. I said I had already refused for reasons given, but as His Majesty's wishes were commands to me I placed myself in his hands. After some time for consideration he wired that I should accept for a short time under new conditions, so I had nothing else to do and had to wire to Mr. Haldane that in deference to His Majesty's wishes I would accept. If the government play the King we poor soldiers are done and can only obey, at least such are my principles. I think it is rather hard on me, as I wanted a time to myself and had no wish to replace the Duke of Connaught in a billet which he found a fifth wheel to a coach, but I do not see that I could have done anything else. I hope the Duke will understand that it has been no wish of mine, and contrary to every inclination and interest I have, to follow him in the Mediterranean.[1]

When, however, on 28th April 1910, a few days before the King's death, Lord Kitchener had an opportunity of putting his case before the King, the King at once absolved him from his promise to take up the Mediterranean command.[2]

[1] Sir George Arthur's *Life of Lord Kitchener*, vol. ii. p. 301.

[2] Within a few months of the King's death the post was abolished and in its place an Inspector-Generalship of the Overseas Forces was established, General Sir I. Hamilton accepting the post, which included the Mediterranean command. In 1911 the Duke of Connaught succeeded Earl Grey as Governor-General of Canada, retiring in 1916.

II

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Early in 1906 there occurred one of those infrequent cases of ragging in the army, this time in the Scots Guards. An official inquiry was at once held, details of which leaked out in the popular press and were represented in the most objectionable light. Mr. Haldane, in reporting the matter to the King early in April 1906, suggested that the result of the inquiry should be published. The King, however, was strongly opposed to this and urged on Mr. Haldane that "the publication of these details" would be "deplorable." He feared

> that the effect on the rank and file of the army will be anything but good and certainly not conducive to discipline, while the foreign press will again have an opportunity of indulging in caricatures and sarcastic comments on the manners of English officers.
>
> We have as a nation a somewhat morbid love of washing our dirty linen in public, and in the present instance the sole object of making this inquiry public appears to have been a desire to satisfy the consciences of certain members of Parliament and gratify the idle curiosity of the public. The fact that the officers concerned wished the inquiry to be public hardly rendered the publication of these unsavoury details advisable, and the King fears that this will only do harm to the Guards at a time when a reduction of their number has been suggested.

Mr. Haldane in reply (April 10) forwarded for the King's consideration a copy of the proceedings, a copy of the decision of the Army Council on the case, and an explanatory Memorandum. He pointed out that

> the details had leaked into the papers in a distorted form and a wrong impression was being set abroad. . . . Everything was already public and public in a most objectionable light. . . . Moreover, the authorities at Aldershot desired that the court should be held in public. . . .

When Mr. Haldane further represented that with closed doors the "halfpenny press" would have unlimited opportunity for insinuation and innuendo, the King's opposition ceased.

Another disciplinary case occurred at the end of 1907 which again caused the King to protest vigorously against "washing our dirty linen in public." A public court of inquiry had been

appointed to consider the case, and, as in the previous case in 1906, it was intended to publish the proceedings, and Mr. Haldane approved publication. The King in writing to Mr. Haldane (December 1, 1907) expressed, through Lord Knollys,

> his great regret that it was not left in the hands of General Sir John French, of the Aldershot Command, for settlement instead of "washing our dirty linen in public."
>
> The King wishes, however, to make every excuse for Mr. Haldane's action, as he cannot help thinking Mr. Haldane must have been (unconsciously no doubt) influenced by his professional training in coming to his decision. . . .
>
> The King is afraid that in future Commanding Officers will now hesitate to find fault with and report any Officer under their command, from a fear that an inquiry may be demanded into his case, which after the precedent that has just been created the Secretary of State for War would find difficult to refuse. He likewise fears that the "Confidential Reports," which have hitherto been looked upon as sacred documents, will not in future be written with the same freedom and veracity, or with the same sense of security that their contents would not be divulged as heretofore. This will be only natural and in accordance with the dictates of human nature, but it is greatly to be deplored should this prove to be so, and in the King's opinion it may seriously affect the value of these reports.
>
> The King thus considers that the granting of this inquiry will be seriously detrimental to regimental discipline, which in a volunteer army it is of the greatest importance to maintain unimpaired, and he much doubts whether a procedure similar to that adopted by Mr. Haldane would have been followed by any other civilised army in the world.
>
> Mr. Haldane will see from the above remarks that the King has not been able to change his opinion in regard to the very important question upon which he has written to the King.

Mr. Haldane in reply to Lord Knollys (December 4) enclosed a detailed report of the proceedings and pointed out that

> the procedure throughout has been that followed in the Scots Guards "Ragging" case of eighteen months ago. I may mention that the publicity and presence of reporters in that case were sanctioned at the express request of the Guards officers themselves and made to me on their behalf by Sir Arthur Paget personally. So that we have not been taking an unprecedented course. I am sure that much good will come of what has been done, but I don't ask His Majesty to agree with this view of mine.

As before, the King deferred to the view of his minister, not, however, without misgiving, for he detested the publication of details that tended to cast aspersions upon the army, and, as of old, clung tenaciously to the idea that discipline was the concern of the army only, and not of the sensation-seeking public.

III

Meanwhile Mr. Haldane had addressed himself to a more thorough scheme of army reform than had been attempted since the time of Lord Cardwell. He was by now definitely convinced that one of the great requirements of the country was the creation of a territorial force that should serve as an effective auxiliary to the regular army in time of war, and by adroit communications he managed to persuade the King of the justice of his general principles. One of his first steps was to appoint a committee to advise as to the reorganisation of the auxiliary forces into a territorial army, but he nominated this committee, over which Lord Esher presided, without submitting the names to the King, with the result that he received his first rebuke for not keeping his sovereign informed on a matter of detail.

Throughout the ensuing months Mr. Haldane had frequent audiences with the King, who, according to Lord Esher, "put his finger on the weakest points of the schemes Haldane was considering," and on 12th January 1907 Mr. Haldane sent the King the draft Bill of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act. The King gave his whole-hearted approval to the dual scheme, but the Liberal cabinet were by no means so enthusiastic. Finally, on 31st January 1907, Mr. Haldane appealed to the King to exert his influence. The King had studied Mr. Haldane's proposals and explanations diligently, and having with his usual quickness seen the point, came to the conclusion that the scheme should have a fair trial, and determined to give it his support.

A sketch of the new force was given by Mr. Haldane when introducing the Bill on 4th March 1907. He pointed out that it was based on the report of Lord Esher's Committee, and had been submitted to experts. Its chief proposals were to constitute County Associations for the organisation and administration of the territorial or home forces; to adapt the Reserve Forces Act to training special contingents to serve with regulars when

needed, and to enlarge the ambit of the Army Reserve as a striking force. The Bill passed quickly through its parliamentary stages with overwhelming majorities, and by the end of July awaited the formal assent of the sovereign.

After the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act had received the royal assent the King did what no other man, not even the Prime Minister, could have done; he summoned the Lord-Lieutenants of the Counties of England, Wales, and Scotland to a meeting at Buckingham Palace on 26th October 1907, and made a speech impressing upon his lieutenants the duty of energetically co-operating with the Secretary of State in launching the new County Associations. The new Act, he pointed out, revived much of the importance formerly belonging to their office, and its success must attend on the public spirit of the nation which the Lord-Lieutenants and the County Associations were about to guide. He was confident that they would employ their best endeavours to carry out this high work. To use an expression of one who was present, "The King played up magnificently." The Duke of Norfolk replied on behalf of his colleagues, and assured the King in a few admirable words that he might rely upon his Lord-Lieutenants to perform their new duties.[1] That day Mr. Haldane wrote to the King that he could not let the occasion pass without expressing his gratitude

> for the great impulse which he is certain has been given to the movement for the organisation of a Territorial Army by the example which your Majesty has shown to the Lieutenants of the Counties. Mr. Haldane believes that they have quitted your Majesty's presence with a new sense of their responsibility and with a greatly heightened realisation of the nature of the national effort in which their King has summoned them to bear a notable part. If Mr. Haldane is right in this belief, then the pains and trouble which your Majesty has bestowed in making the reception of to-day worthy of a great and historical occasion have not been wasted.

On 18th November it was further announced that the King had commanded that no one should in future be made a Deputy-Lieutenant unless he had served for ten years either in the forces or in connection with a County Territorial Army Association, and on the same day the War Office published the designations

[1] Redesdale's *Memoirs*, pp. 36-7.

of the new districts and commands and the names of the district commanders. After this the work proceeded apace. Misgivings were expressed by some of its critics—for example, the King's old friend, Sir Charles Dilke, who at Fulham, on 1st December, feared that the scheme was too rigid and might discourage volunteers from coming under it—but Mr. Haldane's scheme was thoroughly thought out, and the very indifference of Parliament to the army gave the chance necessary for the measure to be put through. Haldane had called into existence that indomitable Territorial Force which might have been the framework of the new war armies, and which actually made such a superb contribution to the strength of British arms during the Great War.[1] Throughout the inception of the scheme Mr. Haldane had had the full support and sympathy of the King, who understood the question at issue extraordinarily well. The King played his part magnificently, backing up his minister through thick and thin, and it was Haldane who admitted that " there was no minister who had greater cause to be grateful to his sovereign than himself." [2]

IV

The King, indeed, had assisted a ministerial measure more than constitutional purists would have approved, and his attention and vigorous interest did not cease with his formal blessing. On the contrary, as the time went on and there appeared a growing censure in political and military circles of Mr. Haldane's scheme for the reconstitution of the army, the King was found to be in the camp of the critics. During the following year discussions in both Houses showed a growing dissatisfaction with important details. The progressive reduction of the regular army, which was part of the scheme, was deemed exces-

[1] The Estimates and Establishments of the army for the whole period 1906–14 exhibit, for the first time in our history, a coherent work of real organisation for war, by which the traditional and fortuitous establishments of the several arms were replaced by proportions scientifically calculated to produce, from the men and money available, the six divisions and one cavalry division of the Old Contemptibles. By these changes, the expeditionary force of 60,000 men, which we had before the South African War, was increased to 160,000 regulars, with 14 organised divisions of territorials in the second line capable of indefinite extension. In the three years from 1906 Army Estimates were reduced by two millions—the army's contribution to the needs of the navy.

[2] Lord Redesdale's *King Edward VII.* p. 45.

sive from one point of view and inadequate from another Many leaders of military opinion, including Lord Roberts, questioned the adequacy of the Special Reserve and the Territorial Artillery, and in the House of Lords on 12th March 1908 he declared that Mr. Haldane's scheme provided no trained artillery in sufficient force to meet a surprise invasion. The King attached importance to much of the adverse criticism, and deemed Lord Roberts's strictures worthy of the War Secretary's earnest attention. Haldane, however, had supporters as keen as his critics, and on 24th March 1908 General Sir John French, who had succeeded the Duke of Connaught as Inspector-General in 1907, wrote to the King supporting Mr. Haldane and opposing Lord Roberts. He felt very strongly that

"if any measure of success is to attend the scheme the new Territorial Army must receive the utmost help and encouragement—particularly at the present time.

"But quite apart from this," he added, "I am fully persuaded in my own mind that given the six months' permanent training on mobilisation—under the special circumstances in which it must take place—Field Artillery can be trained to a *certain* pitch of efficiency and there is no reason to think they will be either 'dangerous' or 'useless.'"

To Sir John French's letter the King replied from Biarritz, through Sir Arthur Davidson, on 27th March 1908,

that he cannot agree to what you say about the Territorial Artillery. The King was very much impressed with Lord Roberts's speech, as it crystallised what he had heard from a variety of sources and quarters, viz., that it requires longer to train and turn out successfully a good gunner than a soldier of either of the other two arms, that unless the gunner is the finished article he is worse than useless, because you rely on him as the backbone of your defence, and if he falls short, your defence is broken down at once. There is no possibility of improving him at the last moment; it is too late and the training is too technical and scientific to replace, in a few hurried drills, what is only obtained by steady continuous training. There is *no* doubt that the amount of training allotted to the garrison artillery is not sufficient to put them on a par with the defensive artillery of other nations. They may know enough to load and fire their guns, and to lay them with more or less varying accuracy, but that is all, and Lord Roberts's opinion, which cannot be ignored as an artillery expert, is shared by a great number of other practical soldiers.

The King will be quite prepared to hear what you have to say, but in the meantime he adheres to his opinion and he desires me to write to Mr. Haldane to put, in general terms, his apprehensions with regard to this portion of the Territorial Army.

On the same day that Sir John French wrote to the King, the King, through Sir Arthur Davidson, had written to Mr. Haldane from Biarritz :

The King has been seriously concerned to read in the recent debate in the House of Lords the severe strictures passed upon the composition, duties, and allotment of the Artillery force in the new Territorial Army.

So far as the King could judge, these adverse criticisms were not made from party motives but solely from a technical and military point of view, the whole gist and net result being comprised in the view that the actual defence of the shores of the country on invasion are entrusted to Territorial Artillery, and the gunners comprising the force are, from inadequate training, incompetent to fulfil the heavy and responsible task put upon them.

Both before this debate and since it took place it has been several times represented by soldiers and others that the weak point of the Territorial scheme lies in the composition of the Artillery, and that the training given to untrained and unskilled men is wholly insufficient to enable them to carry out duties which require the careful, the most prolonged, and the most scientific training of any of the three arms.

The King says he has of course no wish to enter into a technical argument on the merits or adequacy of the amount of training suggested for the Territorial Artillery, but His Majesty wishes to point out in the most forcible manner that a system of defence requiring the highest science, training, and skill, if placed in the hands of men only partially or inadequately fulfilling these requirements, can have but one result, and he trusts therefore that a modification of the scheme, so far as it concerns the training of the Territorial Artillery, may be forthcoming, and that the number of days' training which the Garrison Artillery have to undergo may be in accordance with expert military opinion.

The King's letter seemed to Haldane to be the last drop in the cup of discouragement and censure, and in his reply (March 27), while recognising the high motive and the freedom from party spirit of Lord Roberts's speech, he pointed out that Lord Roberts had fallen into an extraordinary blunder as to

the character of the scheme and the length and nature of the artillery and other training proposed.

He seemed to imagine that the government and their expert advisers proposed that the Territorial Force should be treated as having got sufficient training in peace time to enable them to meet a force of European picked troops without further preparation.

Mr. Haldane added that neither he, nor the Committee of Imperial Defence, nor the General Staff, all of whom collaborated in preparing the scheme, "ever proposed anything so foolish." Under the provisions of the Territorial Forces Act the Territorial Army would go automatically into special war training on the calling out of the Regular Reserves.

Thus the Territorial Force must always and will always have a special war training, and it is this that will make the Artillery sufficiently trained.

In support of his arguments Mr. Haldane enclosed reports by Sir John French, General Hadden, an artillery expert of the highest standing, Major-General Douglas Haig, and other military experts. Mr. Haldane was clear in his own mind that he had the preponderance of expert opinion with him, and he deprecated "discouraging" criticism just as the new force was being formed. The King's reply through Sir Arthur Davidson (March 30) was at once dignified and courteous. He pointed out that

his encouragement of the new Territorial Force has been sufficiently pronounced to show the interest he takes in its success, and he asks questions on any points that appear weak in the general scheme. These points may be sound or the reverse, but at all events the King wishes to know their value.

The King gathered from the views of Lord Roberts and others that the training of the Territorial Artillery was inadequate, and drew your attention to their argument that if these gunners were imperfectly trained their value disappeared.

In your reply you say that on expert advice you consider both system and training adequate and sufficient, and with that opinion the King's question is answered.

One point on which the King is doubtful is whether on mobilisation (on outbreak of war) the Territorial Artilleryman will be able to complete his six months' training before his services are required.

The King says he is fully aware of the time, infinite trouble,

and care which you and your advisers have spent upon the new Territorial Force, and his questions and criticisms are put, not with the idea of "discouragement" but with the desire of ensuring the Force being as efficient as circumstances will allow.

Mr. Haldane now (April 2) thanked the King "for the gracious reply to his letter," and assured him that

"the Committee of Imperial Defence is now engaged on the writing out of a scheme of defence by part of the Regulars and by the Navy during the period of this six months, which shall ensure that the Territorial Force is not required until it is in a condition to take the field."

He was "glad to be able to inform your Majesty that recruits are already coming forward in large numbers for the Territorial Force and that things promise well."[1]

Meanwhile, Lord Esher was keeping up his correspondence with the King, and recognised the reasonableness of the King's misgivings as to the ability of the army on its present footing "to fulfil many of the functions which not only the public, who are generally ignorant of such matters, but many of your Majesty's advisers who should know better believe it *can* fulfil." The King, who was at Biarritz, in reply through Major Ponsonby (April 11, 1908) feared that Lord Esher was attaching too much importance to the opinions of the general officers "who have no alternative but to express agreement with the present scheme," and pointed out that it would be suicidal for them to disagree—

and who can blame them for endeavouring loyally to carry out the ideas of the present Secretary of State? If a new Secretary of State were to be appointed to-morrow with a totally new scheme, would they not be equally obliged to back him up or leave? From the recent correspondence published between Arnold-Forster and Haldane the military experts seem to have supplied advice to suit each scheme. The King says we are the laughing-stock of Europe. In all conversations reported from abroad with reference to possible combinations of Powers, the phrase constantly occurs "England in its present unprepared state," and yet His Majesty is assured that the army is in a better state than it has ever been before. The King says that this thirst for economy has completely overshadowed the real

[1] Mr. Haldane, however, was a trifle optimistic, and fears for the failure of the Territorial Army seemed strengthened by the end of April 1908, when only 106,000 men had joined out of the requisite 300,000. It was not until two years later that the Force approached its establishment strength.

aim, which should be efficiency Wholesale reductions have been made in order to please the extreme and noisy portion of the party. The whole scheme has become a compromise and, therefore, pleases neither side. It is the outcome of a mental gymnastic of a clever lawyer.

The King has no wish to have an army anything on the lines of a continental army, but to reduce our already small army in order to create a territorial or visionary army, which does not come into existence until six months after the declaration of war, seems nothing short of madness. In any case it would have been wiser to create the Territorial Army before reducing the Regular Army.

The King returned to England on 19th April 1908, and within a month of his return there occurred a serious divergence of views in the cabinet over the army estimates. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr Winston Churchill were for the utmost economy, while Mr. Haldane, not unnaturally, was pressing for the fullest financial support. By August matters had grown so acute that Mr Haldane was prepared to resign if Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill had their way, On receipt of this information from Lord Esher the King commented, "I quite agree that Haldane must not resign, it would be rank cowardice." Mr. Haldane remained at his post, although further economies were effected in the army estimates.

V

In all matters concerning the new Territorial Force the King took the greatest interest. Even the nomenclature of the new units came under his vigilant eye. Early in 1908 he suggested that the designation of " yeomanry " should be abandoned, and a little later objected to the term " horse " as applied to mounted troops, preferring " cavalry " in its stead, though he questioned whether regular troops might not resent the expression being applied to auxiliaries.

When, in the following May, the question of uniforms for the new units came under consideration, the King was in his element As to whether the officers of the Territorial force should wear gold or silver lace he sought the opinion of the new Territorial Advisory Council, who, as Mr. Haldane informed him on 16th May, advised that each unit should have five years to decide

which they would prefer. The King concurred but suggested that gold lace "should only be given to individual units under special circumstances." In each case the proposed uniform for each unit was submitted to the King, who was active in comment.

There are many letters proving the King's interest in this phase of army administration, but the following practically summarises his views on Territorial uniforms in general. At the King's request Major Frederick Ponsonby wrote on 28th December 1908 to General Sir William Mackinnon, the newly appointed Director-General of the Territorial force :

> I submitted your letter to the King and His Majesty said that no doubt it was the fault of the artists, but that the helmet shown on the enclosed sketch bore a very striking resemblance to the Blues' helmet. In fact, the ordinary observer would see no difference.
>
> With reference to the gold lace, the King considers that the tunic might be made equally smart if some of this lace were to be taken away.
>
> The King thinks that officers of the yeomanry should not be encouraged to devise expensive uniforms, and that the tunic shown on the sketch would undoubtedly put the poorer officers to a great deal of expense.
>
> I understand His Majesty's point to be that in a volunteer army the uniform is a certain asset, but it is unwise to gamble with it. If it is found that the Territorial army like to be mistaken for regulars and wish for a uniform that is practically the same as the Regular army wear, it may improve the Territorial army recruiting to give way to them, but you lose any advantage a smart uniform may give to the Regular army. You, therefore, increase the Territorial army at the expense of the Regular army. That, at least, is the tendency.
>
> I think that if another sketch was prepared, clearly showing the difference in the helmet and with a modification of the Austrian knots on the sleeve, the King would approve.

The King's interest did not stop at uniforms and accoutrements. He was sedulously active in his public support of the new force, and throughout 1908 and 1909 he held levées of the officers of the newly-formed Territorial units, and presented the colours to each of the new battalions as they were raised. In two months alone, June and July 1909, the King presented colours to no less than 130 battalions of the new Territorial force. In June 1909 he presented colours to 108 Territorial regiments

at Windsor. Early in July, at Knowsley Park, Lord Derby's Lancashire seat, he reviewed the West Lancashire Division, and the following day at Worsley Park, Lord Ellesmere's seat, he reviewed the East Lancashire Division, a total of 30,000 men. Both reviews were preceded by the presentation of colours to the various battalions Later in the month he inspected the Hon. Artillery Company. In every possible way he showed his public approval of the Territorial scheme.

CHAPTER XXII

THE KING'S TOUR OF 1906

I

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FROM the cares of state there was one form of recreation to which the King would turn with never-failing zest—that of foreign travel—and early in 1906 the King planned yet another foreign tour. As usual, Paris was included in the itinerary for a short stay, prior to passing on to Biarritz, but the main portion of the tour was to be occupied in a Mediterranean cruise from Marseilles to Athens, *via* Messina. On 4th March the King left Portsmouth and arrived in Paris incognito. He at once exchanged visits with the new President, M. Fallières, and on the Sunday he invited M. Rouvier, the Prime Minister, and Baron de Courcel, who had just returned from Berlin, to dine with him. On Monday M. Loubet and M. Delcassé (who was then out of office) lunched with him at the Embassy. The honour shown to M. Delcassé reduced the French press to a wondering silence, and excited some suspicion in Germany as a conspicuous mark of sympathy with the fallen statesman and a demonstration of the King's attachment to the entente.

A few days later the King arrived in his beloved Biarritz, where he had spent some of the happiest hours of his life. He felt for this quiet seaside resort (as it then was) an affection that was only inferior to his love for Sandringham. There was in King Edward little of that poetic strain which culminates in glowing descriptions of seascape or landscape, but his letters from Biarritz do contain references to his natural surroundings, references which are so markedly absent in the majority of his letters.

"Though this place is quieter than the Riviera," he wrote to Lady Londonderry (March 26), "it is more bracing and I am

sure healthier I have charming rooms in a very big hotel close to the sea. The continual roll of the Atlantic is not unpleasant and the views are splendid. Golf is the principal pastime, but the roads are excellent and I take continually long motor drives into the country and to Spain. There are a great many English here, among others the Devonshires, who left on Saturday, the Roxburghs, the Dowager Duchesses of Roxburgh and Manchester, Dudleys, De Ramseys, Poltimores, Lady Yarborough, etc., etc. I shall meet the Queen at Marseilles in the yacht."

The King's allusion to his "long motor drives into the country and to Spain" held much more in it than a reference to his love of motoring. A few days before writing to Lady Londonderry he had driven over the Spanish border to San Sebastian, where he lunched at the Miramar Palace with the youthful King Alfonso [1] and the Spanish royal family, and subsequently had a long conversation with his twenty-year-old host. No ministers were present at the interview between the two Kings, who had much in common despite the great dissimilarity in their ages. The King liked the high-spirited and venturesome Don Alfonso, who, although he had the Hapsburg pride that insisted on the retention of the splendour and etiquette of the old Spanish Courts, combined with it a Bourbon charm of manner that appealed warmly to the King's idiosyncrasy. The next day King Alfonso came over to Biarritz to luncheon with the King, and another long conversation followed.

There was much, indeed, for the two sovereigns to discuss, for the King of Spain had just become engaged to a niece of the King. A year earlier, in January 1905, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, who were wintering in Egypt with their two daughters, Princess Margaret and Princess Patricia, had accepted an invitation to visit the King of Spain on their return journey. When the visit to Egypt was ended, however, the engagement of Princess Margaret of Connaught to the eldest son of the Crown Prince of Sweden was announced, and the Duke deemed it necessary to return immediately to England. His decision to postpone his visit to Spain somewhat displeased King Alfonso, who pointed out to the King, through Sir Arthur Nicolson (March 12, 1905), that he was placed "in an awkward position with the German Emperor, whom he regretted that he could

[1] King Alfonso XIII. was born King on 17th May 1886, but until his sixteenth birthday his mother, Queen Maria Christina, acted as Queen-Regent.

Protestant faith. Two days later, on 9th March, the announcement was made simultaneously in London and Madrid of the forthcoming marriage of King Alfonso and Princess Ena of Battenberg.

Three weeks later the King wrote to Sir Edward Grey, who had gone deeply into the religious and constitutional questions involved and had submitted his conclusions to the King:

The King has read Sir Edward Grey's memo. of 27th March, relative to the marriage of his niece Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg with the King of Spain. Though the King has given no formal consent in council to her marriage he considers that a Treaty could be concluded as was the case on the marriages of his two nieces, Princess Marie of Edinburgh and Princess Margaret of Connaught.

The King considers it absolutely necessary that Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg should sign a paper formally renouncing her succession to the English Throne, having become a Roman Catholic.

Though there will be no public grant asked for on behalf of Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg she will receive a certain sum from her mother Princess Henry of Battenberg, but that, the King presumes, is a private affair. The King having created Princess Victoria Eugenie a Royal Highness [on April 4] she would have in any further official document to be styled thus.

Following the King's visit to Biarritz, King Alfonso arrived in England on 16th April, and remained till 4th May. On 23rd May 1906 King Edward, who had returned to England a fortnight earlier, gave a farewell dinner at Buckingham Palace to the Princess Ena, and took leave of her next day.

The marriage of Princess Ena to King Alfonso, at which the Prince and Princess of Wales were present, was solemnised in Madrid on 31st May, and was unfortunately marked by an attempt to murder the royal pair. As the bride and bridegroom were returning from the church of San Geronimo to the Palace, an anarchist flung a bomb at the royal carriage. Several soldiers and spectators were killed, and the assassin, Matteo Morales, committed suicide to avoid arrest. The royal couple escaped injury and both displayed a quiet coolness and courage which excited immense admiration in the Spanish people. The outrage had the effect of counteracting disapproval of the King of Spain's choice of an English bride, signs of which were previously pronounced in many quarters. Another of its

effects was to rouse the ire of the Kaiser, who saw in it the result of England's harbouring foreign anarchists. "The attempt," he wrote to the Tsar on 14th June 1906, "was dastardly and fiendish The difficulty to cope with the pest of mankind is, as you rightly observe, that in some countries—before all in England—these beasts may live undisturbed and there plot against the lives of anybody."

The marriage had the effect of cementing the cordial Anglo-Spanish relations, and the frequent interchange of visits between King Edward and King Alfonso during the next four years testified to the happy understanding between the two sovereigns and their respective countries.

II

On 2nd April 1906 the King left Biarritz for Marseilles, where he met Queen Alexandra, Princess Victoria, and Sir Charles Hardinge, who had arrived from England. Here at Marseilles bad weather upset the royal programme, and it was not until 7th April, three days later than had been arranged, that the *Victoria and Albert* left Marseilles for Athens *via* Messina. On the same day King George of Greece (Queen Alexandra's brother) left Athens for Corfu there to await King Edward's arrival [1]

On 11th April the King and Queen arrived at Corfu, where they met the Prince and Princess of Wales, who had just arrived from Egypt, and King George of Greece, and for a few days the royal party enjoyed the happy experience of informal intercourse.

Six days later King Edward, Queen Alexandra, and Princess Victoria arrived at the Piraeus on their state visit to the King and Queen of Greece at Athens, and in reply to the Mayor's address of welcome King Edward urged him to "Tell the people I love, have always loved, and ever shall love Greece" At the time, the seventy-fifth anniversary of Greek independence was in course of celebration, and the rejoicings included a revival of the ancient Olympic games, which the King frequently attended. A few days later, while still at Athens, he wrote to Lady Londonderry:

[1] Six months earlier (November 1905) King George of Greece, accompanied by Prince and Princess Nicholas, had visited England as the King's guests at Windsor.

. . . The International Olympic Games here have been a wonderful sight, with myriads of spectators in the vast amphitheatre. There were 40,000 tickets sold yesterday. We are leaving to-morrow or the next day for Naples, and trust that Vesuvius will now have quieted down after the havoc which he has inflicted on the inhabitants. The Queen and my daughter are thinking of continuing their cruise.

On the afternoon of 21st April the Greek Prime Minister and Foreign Minister were received by the King, and had long conversations with Sir Charles Hardinge. It was during the course of these conversations that the Cretan question was tackled, and the subsequent settlement was often quoted as proof of usefulness of Sir Charles Hardinge's attendance on the King during the royal tours.

It was certainly no light problem that the King and Hardinge now faced. Prince George of Greece, the King of Greece's second son, had, in 1898, been made by the Great Powers High Commissioner of the Turkish island of Crete for three years, under the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan. But his lot had been by no means an easy one. One party in the island, under M. Venizelos, aimed at securing the complete independence of the island, whilst the majority of the Cretan Assembly were committed to a policy of union with Greece. As early as 10th June 1901 Prince George had written at length to the King on the situation. The Consuls of the Powers, he said, excepting only Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Graves, the British Consul, openly sided with the advocates of independence, and refused to transmit to their respective governments his note on the voting of the Cretan Assembly in favour of union with Greece.

"I hope that you, dear Uncle," he concluded, "who put so much value on people's behaviour, will understand in what a difficult position I am. I hope you will excuse my troubling you about all this, but my task is difficult and my position very delicate, and I think that my work of two and a half years, and my impartial ways towards Christians and Moslems, don't deserve the way in which I am treated by the Consuls."

The King invited Lansdowne's counsel as to a reply.

"I think," the King wrote to the Foreign Secretary on 23rd June, "the Consuls, excepting Mr. Graves, have behaved in a very tactless way towards him, which is about the mildest

expression I can use. . . He will resign his post in disgust, and this would cause great embarrassment to the Powers."

Lansdowne in reply pointed out that the vote in the Cretan Assembly was the result of undue Athenian influence, and did not genuinely represent Cretan feeling. Prince George's policy of rule had been successful in reconciling conflicting interests, and the Powers, while they were anxious for him to renew his terms, deprecated any change in the status of the island The King now wrote to Prince George urging the continuance of the path which he had hitherto followed, and counselled him to avoid unduly favouring the Greek unionists—counsel which the young Prince for the time being followed.

In December 1901 Prince George's mandate as High Commissioner was extended for three years more, and the island continued to enjoy a tranquil prosperity such as it had not known for generations. The presence of British and other foreign troops in the island contributed not a little to this result.

In June 1904 the question was raised as to the desirability of continuing the presence of international troops in Crete. The King was emphatic in his wish (June 9) "that British troops *will not* be withdrawn from Crete, as Prince George leans on England more than any other country—and especially for advice," and he minuted to Mr. Balfour (June 11): "It is surely not the *number* of troops that matters, but the fact that the presence of British troops, however few, proves that we take an active interest in maintaining the State." The King's objection carried weight and the British troops remained

But by the end of 1904 Prince and people had tired of one another. Complaints by the Venizelos party of Prince George's administration of Crete grew, whilst the agitation for union with Greece was increasing. In March 1905 there was a revolution, which was suppressed, against Prince George and in favour of union with Greece. By 13th March 1906 Sir Charles Hardinge was reporting to the King that it was difficult to maintain order in the island, and that the disturbances were causing increasing anxiety. The King agreed that Lord Lansdowne's proposal for a conference of Ambassadors at Rome should be revived, but added that

they ought to arrive at some definite conclusion as to the fate of that unfortunate Island, as the present state of things is so

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The King's interest in the land of Greece was never entirely confined to the country's political embarrassments. As Prince of Wales he had inspected for himself the ancient monuments at Athens and elsewhere, and sympathised with the efforts in England, America, and Germany to promote the study of Hellenic art and architecture. King George of Greece was an active patron of archaeological research, and King Edward was always ready to do what he could to encourage his brother-in-law's antiquarian zeal. As Prince of Wales the King had identified himself in 1883 with the first endeavour in England to found and endow the British School of Archaeology at Athens, and in 1895 he supported Mr. Charles Waldstein (afterwards Sir Charles Walston) in placing it on a sound footing. He took the opportunity of visiting the British School on 18th April 1906, and was much interested in hearing from Dr. Robert Bosanquet, the Director, of its activities.

Other visits to places of historic note in Athens followed, the King's unostentatious manner and friendly accessibility completely winning the hearts of the Athenians. After visiting Katakolo and Mount Olympus the King left Greece for Naples, stopping at Messina to see Taormina, which he described as "such a lovely place." At Naples he set out to see the Vesuvius Observatory, but the road was so bad owing to a recent eruption that the project had to be postponed. The distress caused by a further eruption of Vesuvius aroused the King's sympathy; he contributed liberally to the relief fund in aid of the "poor unfortunate people," and repeatedly asked for information. On 30th April a second and successful attempt was made to visit the Observatory. The King's action in going personally to the stricken area and contributing to the relief fund aroused much gratitude, and King Victor Emanuel sent a cordial telegram of thanks.

The next day the King, travelling as Duke of Lancaster, left for Paris, where he remained incognito from the 2nd to the 6th May. It was a season of much internal disturbance. Strikes in various trades were in progress throughout the country and there was considerable disorder. Moreover, a general election was in process. Since he had left Paris on 7th March a new ministry

had come into office, with M. Sarrien as Prime Minister, M. Léon Bourgeois as Foreign Minister, M. Clemenceau, who was destined to succeed M. Sarrien a few months later, as Minister of the Interior, M Poincaré, Minister of Finance, and M. Briand, Public Instruction and Worship. King Edward and Sir Charles Hardinge saw many of the new ministers and found their enthusiasm for the entente as great as had been that of their predecessors. There was talk of the likelihood of a rapprochement between England and Russia, which led the French ministers to anticipate a new *Triplice* of France, England, and Russia. On 2nd May King Edward called on the King of Serbia, who was also visiting Paris, and the meeting did much to heal the strained relations between the two countries.[1] With the exception of a complimentary dinner at the Élysée, the next few days were spent quietly, and on 7th May the King returned to England

It was a quiet ending to a tour that had been full of varied interest, and one that had no little effect on Britain's foreign relations Not only Spain and Greece, but also Italy and France were drawn into more friendly relations with Britain, and it could truly be said that with the possible exception of Germany there was not a country in Europe that since 1901 had not responded to the smiles and happy informality of King Edward the Seventh.

IV

The King's indulgence in his love of foreign travel had, however, one great drawback—that of occasionally delaying his assent to matters of state. The King realised this disadvantage, and was careful, throughout his reign, never to go beyond easy reach of his capital. Paris, Biarritz, Marienbad, and Copenhagen, his favourite continental resorts, were all within thirty-six hours of London, and when the King extended his tours to Reval, Cartagena, Athens, or Italy, it was only for a call of two or at most three days. Thus, whether cruising in the Mediterranean or recreating at Biarritz or Marienbad, or paying family visits to Copenhagen, he was always within a day or two of London in case of emergency.

It was this desire to be at hand that led him, in the course

[1] See pp. 269-73 *supra*.

CHAPTER XXIII

ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1906–1907

I

1906 — Ætat. 64

At the beginning of 1906 the personal relations between the King and the Kaiser, which had been severely strained during the Moroccan crisis of 1905, began to improve. The result was due mainly to King Edward's desire for a friendly understanding with his nephew, in spite of the fact that events seemed to be alienating their two countries. On 4th December 1905 Count Metternich, the German Ambassador in England, reported to Berlin that the prospects of reconciliation between England and Germany were good. "I know from a reliable source that King Edward, probably feeling that he went too far towards the other side last summer, desires a settlement of personal and political differences. . . . He is too good a politician to oppose a popular movement in any case."[1] The King, although fully conscious of Germany's aggressive sentiment, was unwilling to add to the international difficulty by yielding to the natural irritation which his nephew's arrogance often caused him. Hence on the occasion of the Kaiser's birthday, 27th January 1906, King Edward sent him a letter couched in conciliatory terms. The King was anxious that the Algeciras Conference, which was just assembling, should serve the cause of peace and should dissipate the threat of a European war which had darkened the previous year. "My earnest wish," the King wrote, "is that the conference may come to a satisfactory solution, guaranteeing peace and fair treatment to everybody." The King congratulated the Kaiser on his approaching silver wedding and announced that he was sending his brother-in-law Prince Christian to represent him at the festivities.

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xx. ii. p. 682.

"We have now," he continued, "entered a new year—and I am sure you share my feelings that it is to be hoped that it will be a peaceful and prosperous one for all Nations! Above all, I am most desirous that the feeling between our two countries may be on the best footing

"We are—my dear William—such old friends and near relations that I feel sure that the affectionate feelings which have always existed may invariably continue Most deeply do I deplore the uncalled for expressions made use of in the Press concerning our two countries and most ardently do I trust that they will cease—but in my country we do not possess either the power or the means of preventing the expression of so-called public opinion!

"I regret that many statements have been made to you which are not based upon any true foundation. Count Metternich has been staying here for a few days and I have had the opportunity of having several conversations with him on the subject and he will, I hope, convey my views to you I am well aware how anxious you are that the conference at Algeciras may pass off well—and that no unpleasant subjects may be detected. I entirely share these views and feel convinced that good may accrue from it—above all, that a friendly feeling may exist between Germany, France, and England. Be assured that this country has never had any aggressive feelings toward yours. and the idle gossip and silly 'tittle tattle' on the subject emanates from mischief-makers and ought never to be listened to. . . ."

"The whole letter," the Kaiser wrote in reply from Berlin on 1st February 1906, "breathed such an atmosphere of kindness and warm, sympathetic friendship that it constitutes the most cherished gift among my presents.

"There is no denying the fact that the political relations between the two countries had little by little become charged with electrical fluid to such an extent that its discharge might have created endless woe to both.

"In both countries newspapers as well as individuals, some actuated by political, some by personal motives, worked the public feeling to such a degree that both nations began to distrust each other, thereby causing an immense amount of mischief and the seeds of discord to grow. Cui bono? Who was to benefit by this nefarious system? Certainly, as far as I can see, neither of our two nations has gained even the slightest advantage by this! And as for us two? What concerns me, this state of affairs has deeply grieved me, as my life's endeavour and ideal was to accustom the two nations to work of a common accord in mutual good understanding for the peace and well-

being of their inhabitants and of the whole world. However, according to the British proverb, 'It's no use to cry over spilt milk!' Let bygones be bygones!

"You have just extended your cordial hospitality to my ambassador Count Metternich on the memorable day of dear Grandmama's death. Let us remember the silent hours when we watched and prayed at her bedside, and when the spirit of that great Sovereign-Lady passed away, as she drew her last breath in my arms. I feel sure that from the home of Eternal Light she is now looking down upon us, and will rejoice when she sees our hands clasped in cordial and loyal friendship.

"My policy with regard to Peace is as clear as crystal, and to mistake it ought to be impossible. Yet it is with pleasure I seize this opportunity once more to solemnly repeat, and I hope you will believe me, that it is my most earnest endeavour and wish to remain in peace *with all Countries*, especially my neighbours!

"The German programme adopted for the Moroccan policy and communicated to the Conference at Algeciras is: Maintenance of the open door—*i.e.* equal rights for the trade of all Powers concerned—and recognition of the exceptional position and rights of France all along the whole of her borders with Morocco. This programme is eminently peaceful, practical, and international, and seems to have been received with almost universal approval; it represents the base of our *pourparlers* with France upon which we both agreed to go to the Conference. The reports that I get from my representatives at Algeciras are favourable; the same I hear is the case in Paris, Petersburg, and London. So that a satisfactory settlement may be hoped for. This hope is enhanced by your kind letter which confirms that it is also your earnest wish that the Conference may come to a satisfactory solution guaranteeing peace and fair treatment to everybody. I will not hesitate in affirming that this is the most important and valuable information I hitherto have received. It was an invaluable birthday gift for which once more my sincerest thanks. . . .

"I may add that Radowitz is in constant touch with Sir D. Wallace, so that you should be kept well-informed about our views.

"How deeply do I deplore your beloved old father-in-law's [1] sudden departure from life! It seemed, though he was so aged, as if he never could be ill or be taken from us. One was so accustomed to count on his fine constitution! And yet what a lovely and peaceful end! It was that of a patriarch! Poor

[1] King Christian of Denmark, who died on 29th January 1906 at the age of 87.

Aunt Alix, how she must feel the blow, to lose such a loving, adored, chivalrous, warm-hearted, noble father! Perhaps, possibly, we may meet at the funeral, as I am going to Copenhagen myself. I trust that in the course of this year we shall be able to meet each other, an incident to which I look forward with great pleasure."

On 5th February the King replied:

Your kind words have touched me deeply and nobody is more convinced than I am that you are as anxious now as you have ever been since ascending the throne to maintain peace above all things.

As regards the results to be attained from the Algeciras Conference, I cannot help thinking that it might be settled in an amicable way between Herr von Radowitz and M. Revoil through private conversations and then they might bring forward the results before all the members of the Conference. Germany and France should each state exactly what they want and with a certain amount of "give and take" matters would assume a permanent shape.

Many thanks for your kind sympathy on the occasion of the loss of my beloved and excellent father-in-law, King Christian. All you say about him is so true, and not only will he be greatly missed and regretted by his whole family, who loved him so dearly, but by his whole country and all who knew him.

It is a very kind attention on your part—not being a relation—to intend being present at the funeral! I regret deeply not being able to attend, but aunt would not hear of my going as I had a very bad attack of bronchitis just a year ago, and Laking forbids it. I am besides very lame still and walk but little and with considerable difficulty. I have also to open the new Liberal Parliament and have a great deal of work with my new ministers.

It is doubly annoying for me not to have the opportunity of meeting you at Copenhagen, but in the course of the spring I hope we shall be able to meet somewhere during our yachting cruises.

There seems little doubt that the Kaiser's mind was relieved by the friendly terms of King's first letter. Soon after its receipt, the Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, called on Sir Frank Lascelles at the British Embassy.

"Prince Henry told me," Lascelles wrote to Lord Knollys (February 8), "that the Emperor had been perfectly delighted

with the King's letter. He (the Prince) had been very unhappy last year on account of the strained relations between the King and the Emperor, but he hoped now that matters had really improved, and he could assure me most positively that nothing could give the Emperor greater pleasure than the re-establishment of the most friendly relations with the King."

Yet in spite of the superficial friendship between the King and the Kaiser there seemed to be an underlying distrust that no fair words could dissipate. In his letter to the King the Kaiser had expressed the hope "that in the course of this year we shall be able to meet each other, an incident to which I look forward with much pleasure"; but it was deemed advisable to postpone any definite arrangement, in view of French sensibilities, until Germany's course of action at the Algeciras Conference was made clearer. If the Conference were to prove abortive, the visit could not very well take place. If, however, the Conference ended well, an interview between King and Kaiser would improve the prospects of peace.

By the middle of April the Moroccan crisis had been settled,[1] and in June, Herr von Stumm, the German Chargé d'Affaires in London, asked Sir Edward Grey if the King would see the Kaiser in the autumn on his way to or from Marienbad. A favourable reply was given, but Stumm was warned against semi-official announcements in the German press to the effect that the King had sought the interview. To Stumm's suggestion that the Kaiser should subsequently be invited to Windsor the King deferred an answer for three months, until the Kaiser "shows he is springing no new surprise upon us"!

It was soon evident that the King was more than justified in his suspicions. On 4th May 1906 Count Metternich sent a report to Prince von Bülow, in which he expressed the opinion that the time had now come for the establishment of better relations. The Kaiser's marginal comment was: "I don't believe it. . . . Meetings with Edward have no lasting value, because he is envious. *Propter invidiam.*"[2]

Finally, however, it was arranged that King and Kaiser should meet on 15th August at Cronberg, on the King's outward journey to Marienbad.

[1] See pp. 360-3 *supra*.
[2] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. XXI. ii. pp. 424-7.

II

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The King arrived at Frankfurt station at 8 A.M. on 15th August, and was there joined by Sir Charles Hardinge, who, in response to the King's invitation, and with Sir E. Grey's assent, accompanied him as a private friend The Kaiser, with two of his sisters and Herr von Tschirschky, the German Secretary of Foreign Affairs, met King Edward at Cronberg station an hour later. The meeting was quite cordial · uncle and nephew were in the "best possible spirits." "The Emperor," Hardinge wrote to Knollys on 19th August, "was bent on making the visit a success, and his two sisters, who are very English, both told me that they had never seen him in such good humour" On the afternoon of the King's arrival the Kaiser drove with him to an old Roman fort at Saarburg, which the Emperor was restoring, at great expense and with no little imagination, to what he believed to be its original condition.

At the time of the meeting the Emperor of Austria was seriously ill, and the two monarchs first discussed the circumstances that might arise in the event of his death. The Kaiser inquired whether King Edward would recognise the Archduke Francis Ferdinand's morganatic wife, the Princess Hohenberg, as Empress of Austria in that event. The King replied affirmatively, and the Kaiser too agreed to recognise her The next afternoon the King discussed the same question with Mr. Wickham Steed, and on being informed that the people would welcome the recognition, but that the aristocratic section of the Court would oppose it, especially Archduchess Maria Josefa, the King expressed his impatience at such prejudice and pointedly remarked that "Maria Josefa will have to be reasonable"![1]

No strictly political conversation took place between the King and the Kaiser at Cronberg, and no discordant note was struck. The King, in conversation with the Kaiser and with Tschirschky, confined himself to vague generalities, and told them both that Hardinge would acquaint them with his views, and those of his government. But according to the Kaiser's account, as contained in his telegram to President Roosevelt in the opening days of 1907,[2] the coming Hague Conference

[1] Wickham Steed's *Through Thirty Years*, p. 235

[2] Quoted in *Scribner's Magazine*, April 1920.

was discussed by the King in the presence of my Secretary of State and Sir Charles Hardinge as well as Sir Frank Lascelles, and immediately afterwards a memorandum was drawn up. According to this memorandum, which I have before me in writing this telegram, the King himself took the initiative in telling me that he entirely disapproved of the new Conference and that he considered it as a "humbug."

The King told me that he not only thought the Conference useless, as nobody would, in case of need, feel bound by its decisions, but even as dangerous. It was to be feared that instead of harmony more friction would be the result.

In answer, I did not conceal from His Majesty that I am not enthusiastic about the Conference, and told the King and Sir Charles Hardinge that Germany could not recede from her naval programme laid down six years ago, but that Germany did not build up a fleet with aggressive tendencies against *any* other power; she did so only in order to protect her own territory and commercial interests.[1]

In subsequent interviews with Tschirschky and the Kaiser, Hardinge welcomed the improvement in Anglo-German relations during the past four months, and anticipated its continuance "provided that there were no more surprises and no attempt made to injure our relations with France or to thwart our negotiations with Russia." The Kaiser, in one of these conversations with Hardinge, himself ridiculed the approaching Hague Conference, and urged that direct negotiations between the Great Powers would be better calculated to regulate naval warfare. When the question of a limitation of armaments was raised he declared that Germany, since the peace of Tilsit, had depended on the strength of her own right arm, and her safety lay in her present overwhelming army. She could put into the field three million more men than France and crush France by sheer weight of numbers. Despite his boastfulness, the Kaiser showed a desire for good relations with England. He regretted that British ministers of state and leaders of society rarely came to Berlin, preferring Paris or Rome, and hinted that he was fully prepared to discuss conditions of naval warfare with England before the Hague Conference.

[1] Mr. Whitelaw Reid desired to show this and subsequent correspondence to King Edward, but Mr. Roosevelt declined. "It would never do," he wrote on 14th January 1907, "to show that correspondence to the King, because if he happened to take offense at something the Kaiser had said, as well he might, it would bring me into trouble as violating the confidence of the Kaiser" See *Scribner's Magazine*, April 1920.

Much importance was clearly attached to these interviews, for, in accordance with a previous arrangement, Prince von Bulow arrived at Cronberg to see the Kaiser the next day, the King going on to Marienbad, where he remained until 7th September. A week earlier Bulow spoke to Mr. Haldane, the new Secretary of State for War, when they were both the Kaiser's guests at the Schloss, of the good effect produced by the meeting of the King and the Kaiser. Mr Haldane was in Germany on the Kaiser's invitation to attend the German manœuvres, and opportunities were afforded to the Secretary for War of inspecting the organisation of the German War Office. On 2nd September Mr. Haldane wrote at length from Berlin to the King of his experiences, and of his interviews with the Kaiser, who was in so conciliatory a mood that much flattery was exchanged. The Kaiser again expressed the wish that more English ministers would come to Berlin, as well as more members of the royal family, especially the Prince of Wales and Prince Christian Mr. Haldane reported these conversations fully to the King and sent him his diary of the visit, adding (September 12):

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Your Majesty's visit had been a great pleasure to him. Your Majesty's conversations with the Emperor appear to have inaugurated a period of facility and ease in interchange of views and this may prove useful to the Foreign Office.

III

In the December of 1906 the Kaiser gave a new sign of goodwill. He offered through the King to present to England a replica of a statue of William of Orange, King of England. The King at once accepted the offer as a pleasing mark of kindly feeling. "I need hardly say," he wired, "how much it will be appreciated in England, and how grateful I am for your kind proposition." The King at once informed the Prime Minister of his action, and the Prime Minister replied (December 28) that

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there are many signs of a desire in that quarter to be civil to this country. I do not wish to be unduly suspicious, but there is an ugly Italian proverb that often comes to my mind. It runs thus:

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Chi ti carezza più che non suole,
O t'ingannato ha, o t' ingannar vuole![1]

In due time the bronze statue arrived. "I look upon it," wrote the King to the Kaiser, "as a very fine work of art." The King then appointed a commission consisting of Mr. Lewis Harcourt (First Commissioner of Works), the Earl of Plymouth, and Sir Aston Webb, R.A., to advise him as to the site for the statue. They finally decided to place it in the gardens of Kensington Palace. A week later, in the House of Commons, Captain Craig asked the Prime Minister whether he would recommend that the statue be erected in Belfast, Lisburn, or Londonderry, where the memory of William of Orange's services in the cause of civil and religious liberty in Ireland was treasured. Campbell-Bannerman replied, "My Right Honourable friend, the First Commissioner of Works, has decided upon a site, which is to be in front of Kensington Palace—and in the neighbourhood of the Orangery." (Laughter and Nationalist cheers.) Captain Craig then asked if the Prime Minister would represent to the First Commissioner of Works that it would be a compliment to the Orangemen of Ireland if he would have the statue placed in one of the towns he had mentioned, and the Prime Minister replied, "I do not think the arrangement can be changed, and I cannot imagine a more suitable situation," and there, close by the Orangery, William of Orange remained.

IV

In 1907, after the usual New Year visit to Chatsworth from 1st to 7th January, the King suddenly decided with Queen Alexandra to spend a week incognito in Paris early in February. It was a week of recreation; they were entertained by private friends, visited studios, restaurants, and theatres, "like ordinary mortals," and carried out an informal programme that greatly pleased the Parisian populace. The only public function was a lunch at the Elysée with the President, when King Edward met and conversed with M. Clemenceau, the new Premier, M. Pichon, the Foreign Minister, and other ministers. M. Pichon discovered in the visit no political significance, but there were in some quarters suspicions of a design to stimulate M. Clemenceau to

[1] "He who makes more fuss of you than usual,
Has either deceived you, or proposes to do so."

recognise to the full British influence in French affairs. There was reported to be some impatience in French political circles with "England's meddlesomeness," especially in matters appertaining to the Congo, in respect of which English agitation over persecution of natives in the Belgian territory was resented, and fears were expressed that England was contemplating an international conference which was to inquire into the allegations.[1]

M. Leghait, the Belgian Minister in Paris, reported on 10th February that the King, in talk with M. Clemenceau and with M. Picquart, the French Minister of War, insisted upon the maintenance of the military and naval strength of France, but added that the King had told Prince von Radolin, the German Ambassador, that he was in Paris only to please the Queen, who had not visited that city for a long time.

However non-political the motive of the visit, the press of the three countries, France, England, and Germany, regarded it as a move in the political game The *Echo de Paris* welcomed it as a reply to new manifestations of German Imperialism, while the German *Reichsbote* sarcastically declared that the King had gone "to look after his branch establishment in Paris." It was, indeed, as impossible for the King, as for the Kaiser, ever to make a journey, perform an act, or almost to say a word, which seemed devoid of political significance to some minds

V

The early months of 1907 saw no diminution of Anglo-German goodwill in spite of German suspicions of the King's movements. The King, as was his practice, went to Biarritz for a three weeks' stay in March, which was followed by a cruise in the Mediterranean, during the course of which he met the King of Spain off Cartagena, and the King of Italy at Gaeta. The journey commenced on 4th March; Biarritz was reached two days later, and here the King remained until 31st March. The holiday at Biarritz as usual did the King a great deal of good.

[1] Reports of M. A Leghait, Belgian Minister in Paris, to the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 4th and 6th February, quoted in E. D. Morel's *Diplomacy Revealed*, pp. 61-2 and 65-6.

"I only wish," he wrote on 29th March to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who had gone to Cannes, "you could have come here, as the weather since twelve days is perfectly glorious and the warm sun is tempered by the bracing sea breezes. I felt far from well when I arrived, but after a few days lost my bronchial cough thanks to this climate. . . . My stay here comes to a conclusion on this day week, when I proceed to join my yacht at Toulon, where the Queen and my daughter will also meet me, and we then proceed to Cartagena to meet the King of Spain."

Campbell-Bannerman replied on 31st March, wishing every success for the Mediterranean visit and especially for the King's stay at Cartagena, "which will," he predicted, "be fruitful of good."

The King wrote in the same strain but more fully to Lady Londonderry:

"Four days after my arrival," he wrote on 4th April, "I lost my bronchial cough. . . . I have been making some delightful motor expeditions all over this lovely country. To-morrow I leave and join the yacht at Toulon where the Queen and my daughter meet me on Saturday morning, and we hope, weather permitting, to start at once for Cartagena, where we are due on 8th to meet the King of Spain. My eldest daughter is on the high seas on her way home from Gibraltar, and will, I fear, have a very rough passage. . . . Sir J. Fisher and Winston Churchill arrived here a few days ago and they are most amusing together. I call them the 'chatterers.'"

Sir Charles Hardinge met the King on his yacht at Toulon on 6th April, and "found him in a great state of mind about Cromer's resignation." Two days before, Lord Cromer had telegraphed to the King that for reasons of health he had been obliged to resign the position of Agent and Consul-General in Egypt which he had held since 1883. He paid a warm tribute to the King's invariable kindness and support, and begged that the matter should be kept secret until the question of his successor could be settled. The news came as a severe shock to the King; for he had unbounded confidence in the great Pro-Consul, whose efforts to create the Anglo-French entente he had keenly appreciated. He regarded Cromer's resignation as a heavy blow to British administration in Egypt, and at once telegraphed to him begging him to reconsider his decision, "as your leaving Egypt

at the present moment would be a serious calamity, your services now being more than ever required." The King suggested that "a six months' rest" might restore his health and vigour, and urged him "not to act on any precipitation" But Cromer begged to be set free, pointing out that his doctors were insistent that his retirement was imperative, and the King very regretfully acquiesced Lord Cromer's admirable work had placed him upon a pinnacle of success and glory which the King was eager to recognise, and when Lord Cromer arrived in London on 13th May he was at once received by the King at Buckingham Palace. The King suggested the bestowal of the Garter as a reward for his services, but Cromer, who already had half a dozen Orders, expressed a preference for a grant of money, in which the King concurred. The government now suggested a sum of £50,000, and the King's comment ran: "The government had better settle the matter. They know my views" Two months later the government did "settle the matter" in accordance with the King's somewhat uncompromising hint

VI

King Edward's meeting with the King of Spain at Cartagena was a sequel to the King of Spain's official visit to England in June 1905—a compliment that King Alfonso had long been insistent that King Edward should return. As early as September 1905 inquiries were made as to when King Edward would pay a state visit to Madrid. The Spanish Queen-Mother was perturbed because the Kaiser had stated his intention of visiting Madrid early in 1906, and she urged that King Edward should come before the Kaiser. It was impossible at the moment for the King to accede to the Queen-Mother's wish, and he asked, "Could not King of Spain be induced when in Berlin to ask Emperor not to come to Spain till early in May? King Edward hopes to come in April."

A year later the King spoke of the matter to Hardinge at Cronberg (August 19, 1906). Hardinge gave it as his opinion that such a visit "was quite out of the question, and entirely unnecessary until the Spanish government have introduced a more efficient service of police, which will probably be never."

In December of the same year Sir Maurice de Bunsen reported

to Lord Knollys King Alfonso's sensitiveness on the subject, and pointed out that King Alfonso threatened to give up his visits to England unless King Edward paid a state visit to Spain. Lord Knollys replied (December 29) that King Edward's engagements rendered a visit to Madrid impossible in January or February, but the real reason for the refusal was that the cabinet would not assent to King's visit, as affairs in Spain were too unsettled. Sir Edward Grey, however, thought that a meeting at some Spanish port might be arranged, and added that "a good deal turns upon Spain just now; it would be very awkward if she turned to Germany and away from France and ourselves. The Morocco question would then become more embroiled than ever. But I can't recommend a visit to Madrid."[1]

Sir Charles Hardinge, in a letter to Lord Knollys dated 1st January 1907, thought it was "preposterous that the King of Spain should press His Majesty to pay him a visit at Madrid" when the country was in such a disturbed state, and supported Sir E. Grey in the view "that a good deal turns upon Spain just now." Both Great Britain and France were striving at Madrid to prevent the Spaniards, who were being frightened by German threats, from giving a cable concession to the Germans in the Canaries, the underlying object of the concession being to land a branch on the coast of Morocco and thus to secure further claims to intervention in Morocco. "There are, as you will see, considerations which impel us to do all we can to be on friendly terms with Spain, but not to go so far as to risk the life of our King. . . . Our government must be quite firm for some years to come on the subject of a visit by the King to Madrid, as the Spanish police is hopeless, and there appears to be no prospect of any improvement."

That day Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the newly appointed British Ambassador at Madrid,[2] telegraphed that the King of Spain had informed him confidentially that the German Emperor would pay a state visit to Madrid next May or June, and on this and other grounds urged the reconsideration of the question of King Edward's visit. In a letter sent the following day (January 2,

[1] Grey to Knollys, 30th December 1906.

[2] Subsequently Ambassador to Vienna 1913–14, and Special Ambassador to the States of South America 1918.

1907) Bunsen reported that King Alfonso had suggested that a visit to Madrid might be arranged from Biarritz at a few days' notice.

It could be kept secret until the last moment. It need only last two or three days. Perfect safety could be secured by limiting the programme to the smallest dimensions and by taking every additional precaution that could be suggested by British Police Officers, whose actual co-operation is invited.

The King repeated he could not pay any more private visits to England until the state visit had been paid to him, but His Majesty rests his appeal on high reasons of state.

King Edward was rather annoyed at the King of Spain's insistence, and minuted (January 4, 1907) to Lord Knollys:

The King of Spain is certainly very pertinacious. I shall have to shelter myself as a Constitutional Sovereign under the wing of my Government. On my return to town I will have a good talk with you and Hardinge on the subject, and discuss it in all its bearings. Meanwhile, Bunsen better do nothing beyond stating that he has forwarded the information he was requested to do, but that no answer can be given one way or the other till I have consulted my Ministers. I hope Lascelles may be able to obtain some reliable information regarding the Emperor's movements.

Three days later, on his return to town, the King saw Knollys and Hardinge, and decided that although a visit to Madrid was out of the question, a meeting in Spanish waters might be feasible. Accordingly, on 8th January, Sir E. Grey replied to Sir Maurice de Bunsen:

. . . The King regrets that he is unable to pay a visit to the King of Spain at Madrid as has been suggested, since his government are decidedly of opinion that in taking this course His Majesty would be incurring considerable risks. The King, being a constitutional sovereign, must abide by the strongly expressed wishes of his ministers, who are perfectly ready to bear the responsibility for the decision at which they have arrived.

The King wishes, however, to make a counter-proposal. Upward of two years ago the King paid an official visit to the German Emperor, not to his capital at Berlin, but to Kiel, accompanied by his fleet, and was received by the German Emperor surrounded by his warships All official functions took place on board the British and German ships.

The King proposes to pay a similar official visit to the King

of Spain at Cadiz shortly after Easter, accompanied by his fleet, and His Majesty presumes that the Spanish fleet would also be present on that occasion. The visit to Cadiz would be just as official in character as a visit to Madrid.

The King has been advised by his doctors to spend the month of March at Biarritz to avoid the cold winds here, and his stay there would, like his last year, be incognito.

The date of the meeting at Cadiz would have to depend to a certain extent on the weather, since the King would probably proceed to Cadiz from Marseilles.

The significant postscript was added: "It must be understood that the King will not go on shore at Cadiz."

De Bunsen replied (January 12) that the King of Spain welcomed the counter-proposal with "evident pleasure," saying "I know the King, and it is just like him." He quite realised why the King could not well come to Madrid just yet, and he said, "After all, where I go is for the time being the Capital, and the King of Norway has been visiting your King at Windsor and Sandringham, which is not London."

A month later the venue of the meeting was changed from Cadiz to Cartagena, and it was now to Cartagena that the royal yacht steamed her way.

VII

On 8th April the King and Queen in the royal yacht, escorted by several vessels of the Mediterranean fleet, arrived off Cartagena, where they were met by King Alfonso and the Queen-Mother in the Spanish royal yacht. The Queen of Spain was unable to be present owing to her approaching confinement. There was much pomp and circumstance in the meeting between the two sovereigns which was reckoned as an official visit.[1] The Spanish Admirals,

[1] The King of Spain was not wholly satisfied with the meeting at Cartagena and continued to urge a state visit by the King and Queen to Madrid. When King Edward reached Biarritz in March 1908 he received a message from King Alfonso inviting him to the Spanish capital later in the year, and the delicate inference was made that the Cartagena visit did not count as an official visit.

The reply was made "that His Majesty always hopes to pay visit Madrid, but it cannot be this year. The King could not come now without the Queen, who is in England with her sister, who is staying with her, and as their Majesties have already three state visits to pay next month, a fourth would not be possible."

It was pointed out that the King was staying at Biarritz incognito as Duke of Lancaster "with idea of complete rest and quiet, and departure from this

in their brilliant uniforms of ancient date, came in an old-fashioned rowing barge to pay King Edward their respects. The banquet on board the King of Spain's yacht was a vision of splendour, King Alfonso having furnished the yacht with tapestries, pictures, and much plate from the Escurial.

The meeting was certainly not unconcerned with the attitude of Spain in the Moroccan controversy, and German suspicion was aroused as to an intention to bring Spain into the Anglo-French entente. In point of fact Hardinge had brought with him the draft of a tripartite agreement between Spain, France, and England, pledging the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean. Spain had shown much irritation over the recent French occupation of Udja, on the Algerian frontier, which was regarded as the first step in the occupation of Morocco by France. France, in accordance with the secret articles of the Anglo-French agreement of 1904, should have consulted Spain, and the King and Sir Charles Hardinge were successful in smoothing over a not inconsequential misunderstanding.[1]

There were not lacking German and Belgian writers who saw in the meeting an attempt on King Edward's part to solve the question of supremacy in the Mediterranean by an alliance which should include France and Spain within its scope. Well

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intention for a state visit would destroy character and object of his stay here. The only departure from incognito the King has made is in receiving officers of his Spanish regiment, and this has been done out of compliment to the King and the regiment, as he was unwilling to delay any longer the courtesy of seeing them" (While at Biarritz in 1908 King Edward visited San Sebastian on 29th March to receive a presentation album from the 8th Zamora Infantry Regiment, of which he was Honorary Colonel, despite the anxiety of the British government due to Spanish revolutionary threats.)

"The King has felt very strongly that if the King of Spain visited him here, or if they met at San Sebastian, it would certainly give rise to political gossip and insinuation, and for that reason he has not encouraged the idea

"The question of personal safety, although it may have been a matter of solicitude to the Government, is not one which has entered into His Majesty's views. The King hopes, therefore, that the King of Spain will look on the whole matter from his point of view and will understand why he is unable to meet his wishes, and the King will understand the King of Spain not coming here"

For the time being the King of Spain acquiesced in the refusal, and, although the question was again raised in the following December, it was not pressed.

[1] A month later, 2nd May 1907, Hardinge wrote to the King that the cabinet had accepted terms of Spanish note which Grey submitted. Grey now informed the Spanish and French governments that he was ready to sign the Spanish note at once. The successful conclusion of the Spanish negotiations, combined with the Cretan solution of the previous year, was the best possible justification for Sir C. Hardinge's attendance on the King during these foreign tours.

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indeed might M. Cartier, the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires in London, report to the Belgian Foreign Minister on 12th April that, although in England there was considerable excitement over the King's Spanish visit:

> The English are getting more and more into the habit of regarding international problems as being almost exclusively within the province of King Edward, for whose profound political instinct and fertile diplomacy they, very rightly, feel great respect. The most obvious proof of this attitude of mind is the total absence of discord between the two great historic parties in all matters relating to England's political destinies. It is this fact which makes it possible for Sir Edward Grey to carry on Lord Lansdowne's work without hesitation and without incident.
>
> Confiding, on the one hand, in the enlightened judgement and happy tact of the King, and relying besides upon the capacity of the minister entrusted with the care of its international interests, public opinion is disinteresting itself more and more from questions of high policy, knowing by experience that the destinies of the Empire are in good hands. . . .
>
> King Edward's visit to his royal nephew at Cartagena was no doubt specially inspired by the desire to strengthen the ties that unite Spain to Great Britain, and as much as possible to weaken German influence at Madrid.[1]

The anglophobe Baron Greindl, Belgian Minister in Berlin, also reported (April 18) that:

> Like the treaty of alliance with Japan, the entente cordiale with France, and the negotiations pending with Russia, the King of England's visit to the King of Spain is one of the moves in the campaign to isolate Germany that is being personally directed with as much perseverance as success by His Majesty King Edward VII.
>
> England can hardly expect Spain to give any material aid. . . . Still, in spite of Spain's military and financial impotence, an entente with the Peninsula is not without its advantages. We have just had proof of this at Algeciras, at Tangier, and—quite recently—in the support given by the cabinet at Madrid to the English proposals for the limitation of armaments. . . .[2]

The "encirclement"-of-Germany theory had found its first exponent, who thought his hypothesis had been confirmed when, a little later, King Edward met the King of Italy at Gaeta.

[1] Quoted in E. D. Morel's *Diplomacy Revealed*, p. 74. [2] *Ibid.* p. 75.

VIII

King Edward, accompanied by the Queen, Sir Charles Hardinge, Sir John Fisher, and Major Frederick Ponsonby, left Cartagena on 10th April, and after short calls at Minorca and Malta arrived at Naples on 18th April, and immediately went northwards to meet the King of Italy at Gaeta.[1]

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This fresh advance to Italy excited suspicions in the Berlin and Vienna Press. Three weeks earlier, on 31st March, Prince von Bulow, who was resting at Rapallo, was visited by Signor Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister The interview was credited with a decisive result as to the future of Italy's part in the Triple Alliance, and an official statement was issued affirming the complete accord between the two statesmen on all current international questions. Of the King's visit to Gaeta, Baron Greindl now wrote

There is some right to regard with suspicion this eagerness to unite, for a so-called defensive object, Powers who are menaced by nobody. . . It is no wonder, therefore, that the King of England's proceedings give rise to certain apprehensions here, apprehensions that are shared at Vienna. They have found utterance in an article in the *Freie Presse*, which were reproduced and commented on by the *Kolnische Zeitung* the day before yesterday.[2]

The article in the *Neue Freie Presse* (dated April 15) to which Greindl referred enumerated King Edward's recent series of interviews—the Paris visit, the visit to the King of Spain at Cartagena, now the meeting at Gaeta, and went on to say :

The King of England has not a reputation for caring about parades and shows . . . for their own sake. He is reckoned a clever man of business, who has succeeded in acquiring a determining influence upon the conduct of foreign policy, despite all the obstacles presented by the British Constitution. If the King of England has a meeting with the King of Italy, without circumstances affording any quite external and obvious explanation of it, then it must be a matter of serious politics. . . . The accident of his travelling to Italy from Spain by sea takes away from the meeting nothing of its deliberate and intentional character . . .

[1] He left Naples on 30th April on the completion of his Italian visit, having spent two days at Palermo (April 23-25)

[2] Quoted in E D Morel's *Diplomacy Revealed*, p. 76.

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Who can fail to receive the impression that a diplomatic duel is being fought out between England and Germany under the eyes of the world? The King of England, however, is in serious earnest over the duel, and is no longer afraid of appearing to throw the whole influence of his personality into the scales whenever it is a question of thwarting the aims of German policy. This meeting at Gaeta is another fact connected with the burning jealousy between England and Germany. Here again an attempt is being made still further to loosen the tie between Italy and Germany. Already people are anxiously asking themselves everywhere: What is the meaning of this continual political labour, carried on with open recklessness, whose object is to put a close ring round Germany ("Deutschland ganzlich einzukreisen")?

But an official *démenti* quickly appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung* on 18th April.

. . . In influential circles the meeting of the Kings of England and Italy at Gaeta is not regarded as being in any way of a nature to endanger the quiet of Germany nor the peace of the world. In these circles it is not thought in any way strange that the King of England's tour in the Mediterranean should have led to a meeting with the King of Italy; nor even is it regarded as surprising that the Premier, Tittoni, should have accompanied the King of Italy to Gaeta. Tittoni's visit to Rapallo and now to Gaeta have nothing to do with one another, and it is an uncalled-for assumption when foreign papers state that his visit to Gaeta is in some sort a counterpoise to the visit (of Bülow) to Rapallo. . . . The announcement (of the King's visit) at first attracted no particular comment. Nor would it probably have done so now had it not been for the previous meeting between the Kings of England and Spain at Cartagena, which led to comments in the French and English Press, which certainly made it appear as though the meeting at Cartagena had resulted in agreements directed against the Triple Alliance. . . . As we said before, in influential political circles it is not the view that any such significance is to be attributed to the meeting at Gaeta.[1]

Greindl had set on foot that theory which afterwards became known as "the encirclement of Germany." The theory was a mere figment of his imagination. There is nothing to indicate that King Edward ever contemplated the idea of an eventual war in which Germany would be hemmed in by a ring of steel. On the contrary, his letters, his conversations, the reminiscences

[1] *Diplomacy Revealed*, pp. 99-100.

of his friends and ministers, all tend to prove that the King's one paramount interest where foreign affairs were concerned was the maintenance of the peace of the world. It was not until 1909 that the possibility of a European war crossed King Edward's mind—after the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina—by which time the British agreements with Japan, France, and Russia had long since been signed and sealed. To talk of those agreements as the beginning of a policy of encirclement is the argument of *post hoc*, and a more foolish or baseless supposition cannot be imagined. Whatever conjectures were made as to King Edward's policy of encirclement of Germany, the state papers at Windsor Castle lend no credence to the theory. The agreement with Spain to maintain the *status quo* in the Mediterranean was in full accordance with King Edward's policy of preserving the peace. To remove potential *casus belli*, to smooth away possible causes of friction, was the aim and end of King Edward's policy.

The German press, however, regarded the King's activities in another light, and the nature of the articles that appeared at this period may well be gauged by the following extract.

King Edward is the twentieth-century Napoleon, with this difference—that he is working quietly behind the scenes, employing skilful diplomatic methods instead of brute force. Much as, in Germany's interests, we deplore King Edward's success, we are forced to admire the statesmanlike qualities which have characterised his kingship. King Edward is a cunning gentleman, but too great cunning spoils the game at times.

The German press reflected the opinion of the Kaiser, who, three weeks earlier (March 18, 1907), at a dinner of the Knights of the Order of St. John at which there were about 300 guests, gave vent to his spleen.

"The Emperor," relates one of the Court officials who was present,[1] "who was suffering a little from indigestion was rather silent at the beginning of the evening, but about eleven o'clock he began to talk freely about the policy of England, and grew rather excited. He complained bitterly of the intrigues that his uncle, the King of England, was carrying on against him. He said he knew all about them from private letters from France, and King Edward was equally hard at work in every other

[1] Count Zedlitz-Trutzschler's *Twelve Years at the German Court*, pp. 177-8.

country. The whole press of the world, including that of America, had already been mobilised against him by English money, and it was extraordinary how much personal animosity his uncle's attitude revealed. He ended with the words: 'He is a Satan; you can hardly believe what a Satan he is.'"

IX

On his way back home by railway from Italy, after the Gaeta meeting, the King spent three days in Paris. He was invited by Sir Francis Bertie (April 22) to stay at the Embassy, but the King declined, preferring the Hotel Bristol as it was "more incognito."

The French government "through the British Ambassador" asked him to avoid coming on 1st May as arranged owing to strikes and possible demonstrations; but the King was unable to alter his programme, and he remarked that the previous year he was in Paris on that date and there had been no disturbances. But Bertie pointed out that in the previous year the King really had arrived on 2nd May, and in a subsequent telegram he reported that the French President of the Council deprecated the King crossing Paris from the Gare de Lyons on the afternoon of 1st May.

If His Majesty *must* arrive in Paris that day, arrangements must be made for the train to go from Gare de Lyon by the Ceinture Railway to the station at the entrance of the Bois de Boulogne.

Further, the President of the Council insisted that, as the French government would be responsible for the King's safety, the Prefect of Police "must be at the Gare when his Majesty arrives, although he ought to be elsewhere."

The reply came:

The King will arrive at the station at the entrance to the Bois as you suggest. His Majesty says Prefect of the Police on no account to come himself but must send representative. Please insist on this, as if anything occurs while Prefect of Police is away the King will be blamed.

The incident was typical of the King's courage. He had no fear either of personal injury or the disapprobation of the mob, and his care-free attitude was contained in his comment to one of his friends, "It will interest me to see a revolution."

In the event the King arrived on 1st May, and no untoward incident marked his arrival or stay. As in February, the King was enthusiastically received by the French populace, and his visit was interpreted as a further proof of British goodwill towards France.

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X

During the King's sojourns abroad there was no suspension or diminution of the royal correspondence Dispatches and telegrams came in shoals, whether the King were at Biarritz or Marienbad, or cruising in the Mediterranean Lord Knollys, his chief Private Secretary, remained at home, and the labour of dealing with the correspondence abroad fell on Major Frederick Ponsonby and the equerries in attendance. The staff was hardly adequate to cope with all the pressure of business, and the King, always impatient at delay, complained of arrears, and Ponsonby rightly suggested that the staff ought to be increased. The equerries, at Malta, Minorca, Cartagena, and Gaeta, had perforce to be in personal attendance on the King, and the bulk of the day's work fell upon the overworked Assistant Secretary, who gives a vivid illustration of the arduous pressure under which he toiled on this tour.

"At Malta," he wrote from Naples on 24th April, "I was with the King after breakfast till 10.30, during which time he gave me about fifteen letters to write and a list of decorations to be prepared. Also two copies of letters to do. I then went to a Review, then to luncheon with the Artillery, then to a Levée, and back on board at 5.30. The King sent for copies of letters to show the Queen at tea. Answer, not yet done. Afterwards he sent for me to discuss decorations and asked for *typed* list. Answer, not done. Had I written yet to so-and-so; answer, no. Then the King said, 'My dear man, you must try and get something done.' So I got a list of decorations typed by a Petty Officer on board. He spelt two names wrong and left out a third, all of which the King found out. . . . Although I sat up till 1.30 to get straight, the King is left with the impression that nothing is done."

Those who might still be tempted to regard King Edward as a superman of pleasure certainly had no idea of the tremendous amount of work that he got through each day or of the unceasing pressure under which his suite laboured.

XI

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In the spring of 1907 Sir Charles Hardinge had deemed it prudent to suggest to the King that he should invite the Kaiser to Windsor in the autumn of that year. Hardinge had broached the matter on his arrival at Toulon on 6th April, and the King assented, but on 27th April 1907 the King wrote to Hardinge that in view of the absurd attacks on England in the German press it would be premature to approach Metternich on the possibility of a visit by the Kaiser to Windsor in November, and Hardinge agreed that it would be advisable to wait.

The succeeding month saw no further cloud over Anglo-German relations, and on 2nd June the King indicated to Hardinge that the invitation to the Kaiser need not be delayed any longer, and that the visit might take place in November. The calm remained undisturbed, and the Kaiser showed unusual friendliness by sending Field-Marshal von Hahnke and a deputation of the Regiment von Goeben to represent him and his army at the ceremony of unveiling of the statue of the late Duke of Cambridge in Whitehall. King Edward showed the Field-Marshal and his companions every attention, and they were present at the unveiling ceremony which the King performed on 16th June. Immediately afterwards the King forwarded the long-considered invitation to the Kaiser to visit Windsor in November. On 20th June the Kaiser replied from Kiel:

Dearest Uncle — I am much pleased to gather from Reidesch's report, and from your kind letter he brought me, how you have appreciated the Mission of F. M. von Hahnke, and of the deputation of the Regiment v. Goeben as representatives of me and my army at the ceremony of the unveiling of Uncle George's statue. I am deeply grateful for the cordial and excellent reception they met at your hands. I saw Sir A. Ellis's death in the papers and I can well imagine how much you must feel the loss of so trusted a servant whose company and help you enjoyed for such a long period of life. We are most thankful to you and Aunt Alix for the kind invitation. It is a most suitable thought of you to invite us to Windsor, and it would give us real pleasure to come over. I can well imagine that we might have good sport in the dear old park I know so well. Provided no hindrance arises during the interval, we would hope to be able to follow your invitation. As the papers say that you are again going to Marienbad, I think it would be very nice if

you would come and see us either on the out or return journey, we would then be able to talk the visit over together.

The weather is boisterous and very cool, more like autumn than summer. We have many foreign yachts, especially a large number of French.

Best love to Aunt Alix and believe me, ever your most affectionate nephew, WILLIAM.

The King in reply warmly accepted the invitation to meet the Kaiser on his way out to Marienbad. Again he was accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, in spite of renewed objections in official circles. Sir Edward Grey, however, cordially approved of Hardinge's accompanying the King and pointed to the King's two last cruises in the Mediterranean "as having been distinctly profitable from the Foreign Office point of view, since the Cretan question was settled at Athens last year, and the Spanish notes at Cartagena last April." [1]

Owing to bad weather in the North Sea the King arrived at Cassel on 14th August three hours later than was intended. He was met at the station by the German Emperor, attended by Prince von Bulow and a large staff, and was received with full military honours, the Kaiser having ordered 50,000 men from manœuvres to line the streets. The reception of the King by the enormous crowds who lined the road from the railway station to the Palace of Wilhelmshohe was most enthusiastic. But when the Palace was reached King Edward was by no means pleased to find the Cassel Army Corps, under the Duke of Würtemberg, assembled to march past himself and his nephew. The constant military parades which the Kaiser prepared were not to the King's taste, who preferred the more unostentatious receptions such as he received in France and Austria.

At dinner that evening, as it was a private visit, it was agreed there was to be no after-dinner oratory. To every one's surprise, in the middle of dinner, the Emperor rapped on the table, stood up, and made a very impressive oration. He began by saying that it had been agreed that there would be no speeches, but he could not let this opportunity pass without saying what pleasure it was to receive this visit from his uncle. He concluded with a peroration on the importance of peace to all the nations in Europe, and begged the King to make no reply to these few

[1] Hardinge to Knollys, 19th July 1907.

remarks he had felt himself compelled to make! The King, however, determined to answer. Speaking in German he proceeded fluently, with effective pauses, until, in the midst of a very telling sentence, he stopped abruptly for want of a word. There was an awkward and embarrassing silence while he rapped his fingers on the table trying to get the word he wanted. Prince von Bülow, the Chancellor, came to the rescue and tentatively suggested a word which the King adopted and continued his speech. Afterwards the King complained to Major Ponsonby that the Emperor had done this purposely to put him in the impossible position of either refusing to reply, or making an impromptu speech in German. Whatever the reason behind the Kaiser's action, the King was quite equal to the occasion.[1]

At the request of Prince von Bülow, Hardinge called upon him in the evening in his apartments in the Palace and had a long conversation with him lasting for more than an hour, in which Bülow welcomed the projected Anglo-Russian Alliance and hoped for a better understanding about Morocco. Macedonia and American-Japanese relations were also discussed.

The King himself had two long conversations with Bülow on the same subjects, but the Kaiser and the King, as at their previous meeting, avoided politics in their conversation with one another, nor did the Kaiser enter into any political discussion with Sir Charles Hardinge. The only matter of any political colour which entered into their talk was a mention of the Kaiser's recent meeting with the Tsar at Swinemünde, where the Kaiser said that he found the Tsar in the best of spirits, but "determined to dissolve every Duma that should venture to act in opposition to the government."[2] Though there had been no political con-

[1] Information contributed by Sir Frederick Ponsonby.

[2] A meeting with the Tsar "on the waters somewhere" had been proposed by the Kaiser as early as February 1907. Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother, had, in the previous September 1906, been appointed to the chief command of the German battle fleet. "Henry will be happy to show you the fleet under his flag," wrote the Kaiser to the Tsar on 7th February, and when the meeting took place off the Prussian coast at Swinemunde in the Baltic on 3rd August, the German fleet, at its full strength, accompanied the Kaiser. The Tsar was entertained by the Kaiser on board the *Hohenzollern* on 4th August, and both dined the same evening with Prince Henry on board his flagship the *Deutschland*. Bülow had much talk with Isvolsky, and an official announcement was issued that the cause of peace was advanced. In Russia, however, some nervousness was shown as to the aim of the growing naval strength of Germany.

versation of any importance between the two monarchs, greater personal cordiality had prevailed than at previous meetings. Possibly the German Emperor's meeting with the Tsar at Swinemunde ten days earlier, where he had not succeeded in turning the Tsar against the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian agreement, explains his effusive cordiality toward King Edward on this occasion.

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XII

On 15th August the King travelled to Ischl, "a small town right up in the hills and more like a remote Scotch town," and at Gmünden station he was met by the Emperor of Austria and a crowd of arch-dukes and arch-duchesses. The reception was far less ceremonious than at Wilhelmshohe; no troops were present, and every kind of military display was studiously avoided That afternoon Major Ponsonby, who was in attendance on the King, was charged with the delicate duty of submitting to the King a list of those members of the Emperor's suite worthy of decoration. The Emperor let it be known that he hoped the King would confer the C.V.O. on his Hof-fourrier, who was a Colonel in the Austrian army. Ponsonby thereupon put his name down on the list for a Commandership, and the King approved. At dinner, however, the King was astonished to see this official standing like a footman behind the Emperor's chair, and afterwards complained to Ponsonby, "You have made a most frightful blunder about decorations. You have gone and given the Commandership of the Victorian Order to a footman!" Ponsonby explained the circumstances under which it had been given, and said that as the Emperor had expressed a particular wish that the man should have the decoration it was very difficult to say no. The King accepted this explanation, and it subsequently turned out that the official was one of the Emperor's favourite men and Controller of the Household.[1]

Baron von Aehrenthal, the Austrian Foreign Minister, was present at Ischl, and the King had two long conversations with him on political matters. Aehrenthal was in a rather critical temper. He regarded with some suspicion the recent arrangement with Spain, and showed no eagerness to co-operate with Great

[1] Information contributed by Sir Frederick Ponsonby.

Britain in the Balkans, though he desired peace in Macedonia. He elaborated such views in further conversation with Sir Charles Hardinge, but he finally admitted both to the King and Sir Charles the community of British and Austrian interests and the need of maintaining the traditional friendship between the two countries.[1] The King discussed similar topics with the old Emperor in a thoroughly conciliatory temper, and their relations were in the highest degree cordial.[2] For the old Emperor, the venerable man whose life had been so inexorably pursued by the Fates, the King felt the most profound sympathy, a sympathy which amounted to affection. The aged Emperor, for his part, had a high opinion of the King's straightforwardness and sagacity. The two monarchs had not a little in common; both distrusted the Kaiser, of whom they often spoke, and both desired to see the peace of Europe undisturbed—King Edward because he loved peace for its own sake, and Francis Joseph because he feared war. King Edward ruled over scattered territories which comprised white, brown, black, and yellow races—a loosely-knit empire in which East rarely met West. Francis Joseph ruled over the compact Hapsburg empire, which was a cockpit of antagonistic nations, races, and religions. Each sovereign understood the difficulties of a multi-race empire, and neither would have accepted the dictum "One race, one nation." Each believed that his particular empire was a potent force for the maintenance of peace, and realised that no war could bring them great or lasting benefits. Both were therefore strenuous supporters of the *status quo.* But in character no greater contrast could perhaps be imagined than the jovial, confident, big-hearted King, who charmed with a natural bonhomie, and the reserved and disappointed Emperor who was courteous with the frigid polished courtesy of a grand seigneur.

On 18th August the King left Ischl for Marienbad, the Emperor taking leave of the King at the station. Slatin Pasha,

[1] *Die grosse Politik,* vol. xxiv. p. 7.

[2] A thorough and systematic review of the state papers published by the various foreign offices concerning the meeting at Ischl lends no support to the belief that the King during this visit tried to shake the Emperor's fidelity to his alliance with Germany Margutti's story of the King's endeavours to detach the Emperor from the Triple Alliance is apocryphal. By way of counter-proof the reader is referred to *Die grosse Politik,* vol. xxv. p. 551, where it is reported that "King Edward agreed that a weakening of the alliance between Austria and Germany would be a great misfortune."

"a most interesting man to talk to," as the King described him, was also going to Marienbad, and asked the King if he would look out of the window at Traun Kirchen station where his sisters and an old English lady would be standing. The King at once gave orders that the train was to be stopped there, and on arrival descended and made Slatin introduce all the ladies to him. It was a kindly act that was typical of the King.[1]

At Marienbad the King was delighted to hear that M. Clemenceau, the French President of the Council and Minister of the Interior, was staying at Carlsbad, and with a view to allaying possible French suspicions after the meeting with the Kaiser, the King invited M. Clemenceau to lunch with him at the Hotel Weimar on 21st August. The conversation, as Clemenceau stated to a press correspondent before returning, "had to do with the general situation, especially the Moroccan question, and led to absolutely pacific purposes." Five days later Sir Charles Hardinge informed the King that "Sir Edward Grey is particularly glad that your Majesty invited M. Clemenceau to Marienbad, the moment being specially opportune after your Majesty's interview with the two Emperors. It has given great satisfaction in France and has allayed any susceptibilities or suspicions, to which the French are far too prone, that might otherwise have been aroused." The tactful invitation had a good effect on the French press and public opinion, and was yet another of those courtesies by which King Edward riveted the Anglo-French entente.

XIII

The time was now approaching for the Kaiser to pay his formal state visit to England, and the King, keenly desirous of conciliating German feeling so as to make the visit a success, was disappointed by a refusal of the Foreign Office to respond favourably to an invitation from Mayence for a visit of the band of the Coldstream Guards to that town.

"The King desires me to say," wrote Lord Knollys to Sir Charles Hardinge on 5th October, "that he much regrets the action taken by the Foreign Office in regard to the Coldstream Guards band question.

[1] Extract from letter from Sir F. Ponsonby.

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"He does not see how it can be contended that to allow 14 or 15 bandsmen to go to Mayence for the purpose of giving a concert, in accordance with a practice that is common on the Continent and at home and that is usual in both the French and German Armies, can raise any point of foreign policy, and it is impossible for him to believe that the French can take offence at it, especially when other bands of ours have gone to France itself, to the United States, and to Canada. Should our friendship with France be imperilled on such a trumpery point, His Majesty says the 'Entente' must rest on a foundation so slender as to make it of but little practical value. As, however, he does not himself think it credible that the French could feel aggrieved, he can hardly imagine that the Foreign Office differ from him in this opinion. He does not quite see why the Foreign Office should interfere, and their doing so is, he considers, hardly consistent with the freedom of himself as head of the Army and Colonel-in-Chief of the Guards in matters of mere military detail or with the responsibility of his Secretary of State for War in such matters, and an encroachment on their part on his prerogative both as the Sovereign and the head, therefore, of the Army, and as the Colonel-in-Chief of the Guards, and also on the authority of the Secretary for War.

"This storm in a teacup has now moreover assumed such proportions that unless care is taken the results may be awkward, as permission for the band to go has already been communicated to the German Embassy. He is unable to agree to cancel this permission himself, and should the Foreign Office persist in the line they have taken up His Majesty must leave it to them to take that step, as the Secretary of State for War, who in the absence of any warning that the Foreign Office considered that a question of policy arose, and who acted, as the King considers, in the ordinary course, naturally cannot be expected to take it for them. It appears to His Majesty that even if the Foreign Office are right in their contention, which he does not admit, it would be a very great mistake to offend the Germans on such a small matter, especially on the eve of the Emperor's visit, and he does not hesitate to say that if the Emperor is affronted by the action of the Foreign Office he (the King) will feel very much annoyed, and he considers that they would, under the circumstances of the Emperor's approaching visit, be placing him in a very unfair position." [1]

[1] The underlined passages were added in King Edward's own hand to Lord Knollys's original draft.

Hardinge in reply pointed out (October 5) that the reason for the refusal was that in the previous June the Army Council had declined to allow British bands to go to France, and that to allow a band to go to Germany now would create a most unfavourable impression in France. The King was considerably annoyed at not having been acquainted with the full details of the case, and in the result could but assent to a full explanation of the refusal being given to the German Embassy.

Although the King took care to make every arrangement that might please the Kaiser, some objection was taken to the high German dignitaries whom the Kaiser wished to accompany him. On 25th August Sir E. Grey, in communicating to Lord Knollys the information that the Kaiser proposed to bring with him to Windsor his War Minister as well as his Foreign Minister, pointed out that such a course might alarm the French The King commented : " I cannot interfere with whom the Emperor pleases to bring to Windsor, but Lascelles might talk the matter over with Bülow." But Grey insisted (August 28) that it would not do for the Kaiser to bring two ministers with him, and pointed out that the King at Kiel took Lord Selborne only. The King, however, declined to interfere with the Kaiser's choice of companions, and Grey's protest was unavailing.

A little later, however, the King himself took objection to the suggestion that Prince von Bülow should accompany the Kaiser. The King pointed out that his presence might cause friction "He is unpopular here," he added, " on account of his comments on our methods of conducting the South African war." The Kaiser took the hint. It had already been assumed by the German press that the Chancellor would accompany the Kaiser, and the German public were somewhat puzzled when it was announced that the Reichstag claimed his presence. However, the fact of his absence was welcomed by the Chauvinist Germans as diminishing the political importance of the visit and rendering improbable an Anglo-German entente !

In the event the Kaiser was attended by Count von Eulenburg, the veteran head of the Imperial Household, the wealthy Prince Max Egon Furstenberg, also of the Imperial household, General von Einem, the War Minister, and Baron von Schoen, who had just been appointed Foreign Secretary. The latter had only taken up his duties on 4th November 1907, and his attendance

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Kiel in 1904; he had met him again at Friedrichshof in 1906, and at Wilhelmshöhe in 1907. The visit of the Kaiser to Windsor was thus the return state visit for the Kiel visit. There was therefore

no further question of a state visit to be paid by the King to the German Emperor at Berlin or elsewhere. If the King paid a visit next year to Berlin it would entail a further visit from the Emperor to London at a later date. It would also make it difficult for the King to avoid a visit to Madrid. In the event of an invitation to Berlin being offered by the Emperor, the proposed visit of the French President to London, the suggested visit of the King of Rumania, and the possibility of an interview with the Emperor of Russia would leave but little time available to the King for which such an invitation could be accepted during next summer. It is not suggested that other visits to Berlin or London should not take place in future years, but a sufficient interval should be allowed to leave room for visits and return visits with sovereigns of other countries, and this would not be the case if the official visits to Berlin and return visits of the Emperor to London took place at such short intervals as one year.

The Bagdad Railway had been a subject of discussion since November 1899, when Turkey had granted concession to a German syndicate permitting the creation of a railway from Konia to the Persian Gulf. Another concession was signed on 5th March 1903 extending the railway from Konia to Basra *via* Bagdad, with extensions to Aleppo and other cities. The concession included permission to work the minerals twenty kilometres each side of the railway, to construct a port at Basra, and to navigate the Tigris and the Euphrates as far as Bagdad. It was a princely gift, but required British goodwill to turn it to full account. Germany had suggested that Great Britain should employ her good office to secure a terminus at Koweit, which was in the British sphere of influence. But in April 1903 there was a strenuous campaign in England against co-operation, and the government's decision not to co-operate with Germany was greeted with relief. Britain was thus pledged to a policy which though not actively hostile was certainly unhelpful, and Russia, too, viewed the projected railway with distrust. Meanwhile the railway had been commenced, and in the four following years Great Britain and Russia watched with

concern its gradual extensions. Now, in November 1907, the views of the Foreign Office on this subject were communicated to the King They pointed out that the attitude of the government was by no means one of determined opposition, provided that Great Britain and France were allowed a fair share in the control of the railway and that such an arrangement did not conflict with the views of the Russian government On political grounds British interests were clearly affected by the railway, which would form the most direct mail route to India. Britain held a predominant position in the Persian Gulf controlling nearly all the shipping and trade, and for this reason the government could not welcome a railway to the Persian Gulf if they were excluded from a fair share in its permanent control. They realised, however, that the projected railway was a result of German efforts, and were quite willing to consider favourably any practical suggestions for preserving its German character if the company and the management of the line were international

The King studied the memorandum very closely, but, as was his practice, made up his mind that he would not enter into political discussions with the Kaiser any more than could be helped

XIV

On 11th November the Kaiser and Kaiserin arrived at Portsmouth in the Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern* and, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, proceeded to Windsor. On the following day there was a state banquet in the Castle, at which the King in his toast speech made a tactful reference to the Kaiser's "indisposition."

In welcoming their Imperial Majesties the German Emperor and Empress to British shores, let me express, on behalf of the Queen and myself, the great pleasure and satisfaction it gives us to entertain them here at this old and historic Castle. For a long time we had hoped to receive this visit, but recently we had feared that, owing to indisposition, it would not take place; but, fortunately, their Majesties are now both looking in such good health that I can only hope their stay in England, however short, will much benefit them. I have not forgotten the different visits which you, Sir, have paid here from your earliest childhood, and I regret to think that your last visit was such a sad

one. I shall never forget as long as I live the kindness and sympathy shown to me by you at the time that the great and venerated Queen passed away. Your Majesties may rest assured that your visits to this country are always a sincere pleasure to the Queen and myself, as well as to the whole of my people, and I fervently hope not only for the prosperity and happiness of the great country over which you are the sovereign, but also for the maintenance of peace. I will now drink to the health of their Imperial Majesties, the German Emperor and Empress, and in doing so wish to express again to them the sincere pleasure it gives us to receive them here as our guests.

The Kaiser replied :

Your Majesty's most kind words of welcome addressed to the Empress and myself have touched me deeply. Ties of close relationship and many dear memories of bygone days link me to your Majesty's family. Among these memories stands foremost the figure of my revered grandmother, the great Queen, whose image is imperishably engraved in my heart, while the remembrance of my beloved mother carries me back to the earliest days of a happy childhood, spent under the roof and within the walls of this grand old Windsor Castle. The charms of old reminiscences are now enhanced by the warm reception your Majesties are giving us on the occasion of our present visit.

It is also my earnest wish that the close relationship existing between our two families may be reflected in the relations of our two countries and thus confirm the peace of the world, the maintenance of which is as much your Majesty's constant endeavour as it is my own.

It is in this spirit that I thank your Majesty most warmly on behalf of the Empress and myself for the kind and gracious words with which you have greeted us, and it is in this spirit that I raise my glass to the health of your Majesty and of her Majesty the Queen and to the happiness of all the members of your Royal House, my near and beloved relations.

The climax of the visit was the ceremony at the Guildhall on 13th November, when the Kaiser was entertained to luncheon by the Lord Mayor and presented with an address of welcome in a gold casket. The Kaiser in reply referred to his reception there in 1891 :

When I addressed Sir Joseph Savory from this place sixteen years ago, I said that my aim was above all the maintenance of peace. History, I venture to hope, will do me the justice that

I have pursued this aim unswervingly ever since. The main prop and base for the peace of the world is the maintenance of good relations between our two countries, and I shall further strengthen them as far as lies in my power. Blood is thicker than water. The German nation's wishes coincide with mine.

"Sir Edward Grey, who sat next me," records Baron von Schoen, the German Foreign Secretary, "was visibly moved, and we promised with a warm handshake to do our utmost in the sense of the Kaiser's speech."

During the Emperor's stay at Windsor, the King gathered about him as imposing an array of royal personages as ever assembled there. On 17th November he entertained at luncheon twenty-four men and women of royal rank, including the King and Queen of Spain,[1] Queen Maud of Norway, Queen Amelie of Portugal, and many members of the Orleans and Bourbon families who had met in England to celebrate the marriage of Prince Charles of Bourbon to Princess Louise of Orleans. The entertainment showed the King in the centre of the royal caste of Europe, and attested his social power of reconciling discordant elements.

On arriving at Windsor, Schoen had declared to an interviewer that there was no intention to discuss concrete political questions. The Kaiser, however, was temperamentally incapable of excluding high politics from his conversation No project was nearer his heart than the Bagdad Railway, which he claimed was his own conception. Hence, soon after his arrival at Windsor, he took Mr. Haldane, the British War Minister, aside, and said he was sorry that there was a good deal of friction on this subject and that he did not know what England wanted as a basis of co-operation. Haldane replied, speaking "as War Minister only," that he knew we wanted a "gate" (*i.e.* control of that section of the railway which would come near the Persian Gulf) to protect India. "I will give you the gate," replied the Emperor. Next morning, about 7.30 o'clock, a helmeted guardsman knocked loudly at Haldane's door, and said that he had a message from the Emperor. It was that he *did* mean what he said the night before. Haldane at once got up and caught a train for London,

[1] The King and Queen of Spain had arrived in England on a private visit on 29th October. From 4th to 11th November they stayed at Sandringham, and left for Spain on 4th December.

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where he saw Sir E. Grey and Sir Charles Hardinge who, after taking time to think things over, gave him a memorandum, the substance of which was that the British government would be very glad to discuss the Emperor's suggestion, but that it would be necessary, before making a settlement, to bring into the discussion France and Russia, whose interests also were involved. Haldane was requested to sound the Emperor further.[1]

On his return to Windsor that afternoon Haldane at once saw the King and explained what had happened. That morning the King and the Kaiser had been out shooting together, and the Kaiser had broached the matter to the King. The King had no wish to wade in deep diplomatic waters with his guest and tactfully suggested that the conversation with Haldane should be continued. Accordingly the Kaiser asked Haldane to see him at 7 o'clock that evening, and the King cordially approved.

Haldane found the Kaiser, as he subsequently reported to the King, " very enthusiastic about the possibility of an agreement, and eager to say that about the strategic question of the ' gate ' Germany would make no difficulty of any sort." Haldane pointed out that " the footing on which we stood with Russia and France was now so friendly that it was essential that the discussion should go on *à quatre* instead of *à deux.*" To this the Kaiser made difficulties, urging that German public opinion would object to pourparlers with France and Russia. Haldane's second suggestion that the question could be discussed as a commercial point nettled the Kaiser, who " did not seem altogether happy," but he promised to examine the matter and to communicate with Haldane after dinner that evening. But before Haldane saw the Kaiser for the third time Schoen informed him that there had been " a mistake," that the Kaiser had not known that Schoen had already discussed the question with Isvolsky, and that a discussion *à quatre* was thus much more feasible. Schoen concluded by inviting Haldane to see the Kaiser in his private room after the theatrical performance that evening.

Accordingly at 1 o'clock in the morning the Kaiser and Haldane met again, but this time Schoen, Einem, and Metternich were present ! The Kaiser now stated that he had no objection to a joint discussion with France and Russia. As a result of a long interview, the Kaiser agreed to ask Schoen to go to London

[1] *Before the War*, pp. 48-52.

that day (the 15th) to take the initiative by making a formal proposal to Sir E Grey for British co-operation, and that events should proceed in full consultation with France and Russia. Accordingly Schoen saw Grey, who reported to the King that Schoen had expressed "great satisfaction at the prospect of now coming to an agreement with us about the Bagdad Railway," and "that he recognised our desire to have a gate at the Persian Gulf end," and that he was now open to fuller discussions. Grey informed him that the next step was for the German government to invite the British government, and "of course" the Russian and French governments also, to a conference Schoen promised to see Isvolsky so that the affair might be carried a stage farther and a joint discussion expedited. Everything seemed to indicate a renewal of Anglo-German co-operation

But the *dénouement* seems to indicate how delusive were the Kaiser's fair promises Some weeks afterwards difficulties were raised from Berlin. Germany said that she was ready to discuss with the British government the question of the terminal portion of the railway ; but she did not desire to bring France and Russia into that discussion, because the conference would probably fail and would thus accentuate the differences between her and the other Powers. Bulow had intervened with a decisive veto on a four-Power conference in Berlin, a veto which ended the brief period during which reconciliation was in the air. The King had once again given an illustration of his political sagacity. He knew better than his ministers the value that was to be placed on any assurances of the Kaiser.

The Kaiser's official visit closed on 18th November, the Empress returning to Germany, the Kaiser going to Highcliffe Castle, near Bournemouth, to stay with Colonel Stuart-Wortley. At Highcliffe the Kaiser talked confidentially with his host, and sought "to remove the obstinate misconception of the character of his feeling towards England." His patience, he said, was constantly mortified by "finding that any momentary improvement of relations is followed by renewed outbursts of prejudice and a prompt return to the old attitude of suspicion." Sir E. Grey had deprecated further confidential intercourse on the part of ministers with the Kaiser during the Kaiser's private stay at Highcliffe, whither he was bound on leaving Windsor, "as it

might start unfounded rumours," and it was "very desirable that nothing should seem to disturb the excellent effect which has now been produced everywhere." As it was, the Kaiser's conversation with his host was to create a sufficiently bad effect. A careful note was kept of the conversation, and a year later, on 27th October 1908, it was published in the *Daily Telegraph* and caused in Germany a great explosion of hostility towards England and towards the Kaiser himself.[1]

Before leaving England on 11th December the Kaiser lunched with King Edward at Buckingham Palace on 9th December. He had been, as he remarks in his *Memoirs* (p. 114), "most cordially received by the English royal family and the visit passed quite harmoniously." Writing to the Tsar of his visit after his return to Berlin the Kaiser said: "By my visit to England I think I have removed many causes of misunderstanding and of distrust, so that the atmosphere is cleared and the pressure on the safety-valve relieved." But he added "as a piece of news, only *quite private and confidential for you personally*," a barely coherent statement to the effect that the British people were in a state of alarm over the insolence of Japan and the likelihood of a conflict between Japan and the United States. He was convinced, he assured the Tsar, that England was much alive to the Yellow Peril, which he claimed to have been the first to foresee, and he enigmatically warned his correspondent to be prepared for a Japanese crusade against "*the white race in general.*"[2]

In both England and Germany public opinion with a few exceptions, as expressed in the speeches of statesmen and in comments of the press, viewed the Kaiser's visit and reception as an effective reconciliation. The Chancellor's organ, the *Vossische Zeitung*, regarded the visit as removing all ground for attributing to Great Britain a policy of "encirclement." Prince von Bülow himself asserted in the Reichstag that the "peaceful and friendly feelings" displayed in England were "shared by us and honestly reciprocated." Sir Edward Grey, addressing his constituents at Berwick, while assuring France of the solidarity of the entente, which was not aimed at any other country, said that the visit was "bound to have a good effect. More than half

[1] See pp. 620-2 *infra*.
[2] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, pp. 235 *seq*.

the difficulties of diplomacy disappear when the nations become convinced that neither of them intends ill to the other." He did not complain of Germany's fresh increase of her navy, which required on England's part a corresponding addition to her naval strength, but deemed the position to be "perfectly safe, at any rate for a year or two more."

Yet the visit was without decisive effect. How little German official opinion was influenced by the royal meeting is shown by the circumstance that on the day after the Kaiser left Windsor the German government announced its intention of strengthening the fleet by reducing the effective life of battleships by one-fifth. Battleships were to be replaced in twenty years instead of twenty-five years as provided by the Third Naval Act of 1906. Germany had taken full opportunity of the kindly British feeling to snatch a naval advantage At once the cordial atmosphere vanished. Even "little Englanders" now realised that in Germany they had a strong, determined, and unscrupulous antagonist—and from that day onwards the naval rivalry between the two countries grew more and more acute.

For a few weeks Anglo-German relations had breathed a cordiality which they had not known since the Kruger telegram, and which they were not to know again for a dozen years or more. Under the mellowing influence of a warm popular welcome the Kaiser momentarily yielded to a revival of family associations and a desire to resume the political intimacy of the early years of his reign, but with his return to Germany the good omens vanished before the threat of the coming storm.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN ENTENTE

I

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SINCE the early days of 1904, King Edward had been keen to consolidate the Anglo-French entente by an agreement with Russia. He well realised that there could be no permanent security whilst Russian and British designs were in conflict in Persia, Afghanistan, and China, and he lost no opportunity of furthering a cordial understanding on these three important questions.

Early in 1906 Russian statesmen were anxious for King Edward to pay a visit to Russia. According to Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, the First Secretary of the British Embassy at St. Petersburg, who kept the King well informed of events in Russia, Count Witte, the Russian Prime Minister, was very keen to "bring about a visit here of the King, and this he hopes to do by a direct appeal. He says he will guarantee an arrangement with England if the King comes." [1] Early in March 1906 Spring-Rice reported that the Tsar was delighted with the friendly co-operation afforded by England to Russia on various questions, especially Morocco, and had spoken again of his hope of seeing the King. Later, Spring-Rice suggested that the two monarchs might meet later in the year when cruising in the Baltic. The Kaiser had twice met the Tsar in the Baltic, and such a meeting-place obviated the need of going to St. Petersburg.

Sir E. Grey, now wished to start discussions with Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador to England, as to an agreement with Russia on all outstanding questions.[2] Count

[1] Spring-Rice to Knollys, 31st January 1906.

[2] Hardinge to King, 13th March.

Benckendorff, on returning from a visit to Russia, reported to the King that the Tsar was now anxious for rapprochement with England, and he brought a friendly message from Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who desired England to make the first proposals for an agreement. Count Benckendorff spoke of the King's visiting the Tsar later in the year, and of the wonderful effect it would produce on the relations between the two countries. King Edward, however, hesitated greatly over the proposed visit, and the point was raised that the Kaiser might take umbrage at the King's paying a state visit to the Tsar before he had paid a state visit to Berlin.[1] He was doubtful, too, whether the meeting would be successful, in which case, as Hardinge pointed out, the King's name and his visit would be connected with a failure—" his *first* one "— in the sphere of international agreements. On 22nd March the King expressed his opinion in a memorandum on Spring-Rice's suggestion of a visit to St. Petersburg :

" I honestly confess," he wrote, " that I can see no particular object in visiting the Emperor in Russia this year. The country is in a very unsettled state and will, I fear, not improve for some time to come. I hardly think that the country at home would much approve of my going there for a while. I have no desire to play the part of the German Emperor, who always meddles in other people's business. What advice could I possibly give the Emperor as to the management of his country ? What right have I to do so, even if he were to listen to me, which I much doubt ? Witte's object is that by my going I should enable him to float a Loan. What an extraordinary idea ! and one that does not appeal to me in any way. . . ."

For the time being the suggestion was dropped, but with a view to easing the relations between the two countries the British government suggested a visit of a naval squadron to Russia in July. But the Tsar promptly vetoed the idea, and telegraphed to the King on 12th July 1906 :

I cannot but look upon the approaching visit of your squadron with greatest anxiety. To have to receive foreign guests when one's country is in a state of acute unrest is more than painful and inappropriate. You know how happy I should have been to receive the English fleet in normal times, but now I can only beg of you to postpone the squadron visit till another year.

[1] Hardinge to King, 20th March.

The Tsar's answer was a more than sufficient indication that a visit by the King to Russia at that particular moment might have been no inconsiderable blunder. The King replied: "I have just received your telegram which I fully understand and appreciate. Hope visit may take place next year."

II

The Tsar had stated no more than the truth when he said that Russia was "in a state of acute unrest," and the unrest was increased by his own somewhat inconsistent actions. On 6th May 1906 the First Duma had assembled at the Winter Palace and had been opened by the Tsar in person. Although the Constitutional Democrats had obtained a big success in the election and had secured 300 out of 371 seats, the Tsar negatived their success by superseding his Liberal Prime Minister, Count Witte, by the reactionary M. Goremykin.

Representatives of the Duma were now about to visit England to take part in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which held its fourteenth conference in London in July 1906. The King, who showed every sign of approval, sent a message of welcome on 23rd July, the day on which the conference opened, and received a deputation of members on the 26th. At the suggestion of Sir Charles Hardinge the King also received in special audience Mr. W. J. Bryan, an American delegate, who was the Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

The Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, had promised to give an address at the opening of the conference in the Royal Gallery of the Palace of Westminster, which adjoins the House of Lords, and the fact that there were Russian parliamentary representatives in such an assembly for the first time seemed to make a friendly reference to Russia exceptionally easy. But on the morning of the speech the news was received that the Tsar had summarily dissolved the Duma. The occasion turned from one most auspicious to one extremely awkward. The one feature that saved the situation was that the Tsar had not abolished the Duma, but only suspended it. Campbell-Bannerman, with admirable adroitness, welcomed the assembly with the words:

"I have the honour to announce to you that I am authorised to welcome you in the name of the King, whose services in the cause of peace are known to you all, and who has expressed a special interest in this historic gathering" All of them, he supposed, could remember a time when such a gathering would have been looked on with derision by those who called themselves practical men. "You would have been called dreamers, and your plan for substituting equitable arrangement for the licence and ferocity of war would have been denounced as dangerous quixotry."

After a reference to the various arbitrations in treaties which had all been framed since October 1903, and to the increase in expenditure in European armaments, he added that he could not refrain from saying, for himself, and he was sure for every one in that great and historic assembly, how glad they were to "welcome the representatives of the youngest of Parliaments—the Russian Duma"—a remark that was vociferously cheered by the delegates.

"I make no comment," he continued, "on the news which has reached us this morning, this is neither the place nor the moment for that. We have not a sufficient acquaintance with the facts to be in a position to justify or criticise. But this at least we can say—we who base our confidence and our hopes on the Parliamentary system—new institutions have often a disturbed, if not a stormy youth. The Duma will revive in one form or another. We can say with all sincerity, 'La Duma est morte: vive la Duma.'"

"La Duma est morte: vive la Duma!" The expression spread like wildfire and was heard even in the Imperial Palace, where it greatly irritated the Tsar. The Duma delegates in London, although urged to stay, withdrew from the conference, and left for Russia immediately. Professor Kovalevsky said that although their mission came abruptly to an end, they returned to their country with the unshakable resolution to continue the great fight for that freedom and for the peace of the world, thenceforth inseparable. The next day Count Benckendorff saw Sir Edward Grey and said that he feared the phrase might give offence at Petersburg. Grey upheld what Campbell-Bannermann had said, pointing out that it was an adaptation of the phrase "Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi," which had a well-known historical origin and usage. The Tsar had made it

evident that the Duma was now one of the permanent institutions of Russia, and that he intended to summon a new Duma. The phrase was therefore strictly applicable to the occasion, and ought not to give offence. Benckendorff admitted that this put things in a more favourable light, and Grey heard no more of it from him.[1] Sir Arthur Nicolson, the new British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, in a dispatch to the Foreign Office a few days later, laid stress on the offence taken in St. Petersburg at the English Prime Minister's words, and he added that M. Isvolsky, with whom the King had recently been exchanging fresh messages of regard, was no longer zealous in the cause of a rapprochement. It was indeed not so easy to create friendship with Russia as with France. Russian despotism was repugnant to British ideals, and something was constantly happening in Russia that alienated British sympathy or stirred indignation.

Meanwhile the King's friend, Sir Donald Wallace, had arrived in Petersburg on the day after that on which the Duma was dissolved, and was soon in close intercourse with the Prime Minister, M. Stolypin, who had just succeeded M. Goremykin. On 4th August the Tsar granted Wallace an interview, which, in view of his known irritation over Campbell-Bannerman's outburst, Wallace expected to be very brief and formally cold. But the Tsar proved, as Wallace informed King Edward in a full account of the conversation, surprisingly amiable. He said that he read daily *The Times* and the *Daily Graphic*, and that the former somewhat misrepresented his own position, but he enjoined on Wallace to "explain the situation to King Edward."

The internal situation in Russia now grew rapidly worse. It was now a life or death struggle between the revolutionary forces and Tsarism. Mutinies, outrages, and repressions continued, and it was evident both to King Edward and his ministers that there could be no thought of an entente with Russia until a more stable state of affairs had been attained.

They had not long to wait, however, for the new Prime Minister's wise policy soon appeared to be pacifying Russia, and there were indications of tranquillity in that stricken country. By now statesmen both in London and St. Petersburg were willing to assist in the attainment of the King's ideal, but much opposition was yet to be encountered from British officials in India, not least

[1] Grey's *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 155.

from the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Distrust of Russia was still actively alive in India, and the proposed settlement of the conflicting claims in regard to Afghanistan, Persia, and Tibet roused the suspicions and indeed the hostility of Lord Minto and his government. "It was impossible," as Mr Morley, then Secretary of State for India, subsequently recorded, "for the Indian government to be indifferent, and it would have been unreasonable to expect that government at once to approach it with a friendly mind. Russia had for most of a century been the disturber of peace in Central Asia, and a menace to the external security of our Indian power. There was, therefore, nothing to surprise us in the frowns of incredulity, suspicion, and dislike with which the idea of an Anglo-Russian agreement was greeted at Simla" But he pointed out (July 6, 1906) to Lord Kitchener and Lord Minto, in reply to their protests, that the policy of a Russian entente was not an open question, that the home government were definitely decided on an entente, and that there could not be two foreign policies, one at Whitehall and the other at Simla.[1] The King himself urged greater co-operation and telegraphed to Hardinge (September 22, 1906):

If Foreign Office does not act in unison with Viceroy of India matters might be very serious, as Russian diplomacy never varies.

The same day he telegraphed to Sir E. Grey that he "trusts that the fullest consideration may be given to the arguments of government of India, which appear convincing." On 23rd September 1906 Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, showed a fear that Great Britain might be giving too much away in Central Asia. The King supported the Viceroy in urging on the Foreign Office that the agreement with Russia should not be purchased by too great a concession in that area.

In October the new Russian Foreign Minister, M. Isvolsky, was in Paris, and the King, who cherished much friendly feeling for him, proposed to invite him to London to discuss Anglo-Russian relations. But both Grey and Hardinge were of opinion that such an invitation would be interpreted as an attempt to "rush" him into a formal understanding, and the King deferred to the views of his advisers. Russia was still suspicious

[1] Morley's *Recollections*, pp. 151, 176.

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of England's motive in promoting the rapprochement. From Persia, too, came information of hostility to an understanding between England and Russia, and from India and many other quarters came appeals for delay. Even Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, writing to Grey on 4th November 1906 after an interview with Isvolsky, urged that the projected Anglo-Russian entente needed time to overcome opposition. Three weeks later Sir Donald Wallace had a long audience with the Tsar in the small palace of Tsarskoe. After a long discussion on Russian internal affairs the Tsar asked Wallace to take a letter to the King, and to explain to him "the real state of things here, which is so often misrepresented. Tell him also that I like Sir Arthur Nicolson very much, and that I am anxious we should come to an understanding. . . . I shall write to the King and send you the letter through M. Isvolsky, who is, I know, an old friend of yours." [1]

III

In spite of all difficulties, negotiations were seriously taken in hand in February 1907. During the course of the negotiations Lord Minto wrote an alarmist letter to the King about the Amir of Afghanistan's apprehension that he might be dragged into war. He averred that the Amir would not acknowledge the Anglo-Russian agreement. The King sent the letter to Grey, who replied that he hoped that the Amir would acknowledge the projected agreement, but that in any case the agreement must stand. Isvolsky's first proposals in regard to Afghanistan caused the King misgivings, and he wished it clearly to be understood that there would be no question of "tying our hands" in regard to our relations with the Amir.

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On 6th March Campbell-Bannerman wrote to the King that Grey had reported the favourable course of negotiations with Russia in Persia and elsewhere, and a fortnight later the King was delighted to hear from the same source that Grey was hopeful of an agreement with Russia regarding Asiatic affairs, though uncertain about the Dardanelles. In that month a Russian squadron arrived at Portsmouth and was received with enthusiasm. A

[1] Wallace to Knollys, 9th December 1906.

visit by the Russian officers and crews to London, where they received an enthusiastic welcome, was due to the King's suggestion. Throughout the ensuing months the negotiations continued, and gradually every obstacle to agreement was removed by Grey and Isvolsky.

On 26th August 1907 Sir Charles Hardinge, who was in constant communication with the King, wrote that Isvolsky was hastening the negotiations, and that the Russian government desired the agreement to be ratified by both the King and the Tsar. Hardinge thought that the Tsar's signature would make the agreement more binding than merely Isvolsky's signature Five days later Sir Arthur Nicolson and M. Isvolsky signed the draft Convention at the Russian Foreign Office, and on 23rd September ratifications, duly signed by the King and the Tsar, were exchanged, and the Anglo-Russian Convention was in being.

The full terms of the Convention were published the next day. The Convention bore witness to a complete change of political sentiment in all the foreign relations of the two countries, and in effect brought Russia, France, and England into a triple entente. But the specific points with which the Convention dealt touched only those Asiatic questions which for half a century had threatened to bring the two countries into violent conflict. The first of the three agreements of which the Convention was composed concerned Persia, which was divided into spheres of influence: the northern provinces being placed under Russian control and the southern provinces under British. Only the central provinces preserved their full independence, and there Russia and England were to enjoy equal opportunities. The Persian Gulf was not mentioned in the Persian agreement, but a covering letter from Sir Edward Grey stated that in the course of the negotiations the Russian government had acknowledged England's special interest in that sphere. The King had previously noted the omission from the pourparlers of all mention of the Persian Gulf and British interests there, but was informed that Isvolsky had objected to their mention from fear of Germany, and the King was relieved to know that Sir E. Grey would make a declaration on the subject after the agreement was signed. In regard to Afghanistan the two Powers guaranteed the neutrality of the country, both disavowing any intention of interfering in its domestic concerns. A third agreement acknowledged Tibet to be

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in the same position as Afghanistan and recognised its territorial integrity.

Although Lord Curzon insisted in the House of Lords that Russia was no Power to be trusted and denied that the arrangements settled the long-standing quarrel in Asia, the Anglo-Russian understanding was welcomed by the nations at large as the removal of rocks of stumbling and as a genuine pacification of Asia. There were, however, mutterings in Radical circles against the high-handed treatment of Persia and against the implied condonation of Tsarism.

The German press received the news of the Anglo-Russian agreement as it had received the Anglo-French agreement, with apparent indifference as in no way affecting German interests. The Persian agreement did not touch the question of the Persian Gulf, where England had claimed predominance and where, on the other hand, the German scheme of the Bagdad railway implied German rivalry. Yet the agreement was a bitter pill for the German Foreign Office to swallow. It had been a cardinal point of Bismarck's diplomacy that Germany should always be on good terms with Russia and should foster Anglo-Russian differences. When the Wilhelmstrasse in 1901 had rejected British approaches, Holstein had thrown scorn and mockery upon every suggestion of the possibility of an Anglo-Russian settlement. No German of influence believed in that possibility. Now what the fixed ideas of a whole generation had assumed to be impossible had become a fact. Anglo-Russian relations were drawn closer than they had been for a century. Obstacles to peaceful co-operation had been removed, and there seemed to be every possibility of the abolition of that tension that had so long persisted between the two countries. The first obvious result as far as Germany was concerned was a hardening of the German opinion that King Edward was a prince of diplomatists—a Machiavelli—and a would-be encircler of Germany. Quite early in the reign the King had been held up to ridicule in the German press as a libertine, a superman of pleasure, a frivolous devotee of the racecourse. All this was now depicted as proof of the King's cunning. Whilst going about Europe as a genial, bluff-mannered traveller, he was steadily drawing a net round Germany that would eventually strangle her. These scurrilous press attacks were resented by the King, but he held

firmly to his aspirations of keeping the nations at peace. At the commencement of his reign there had been between Great Britain and France, and Great Britain and Russia, sufficient acute points of difference to have caused half-a-dozen wars. Now every one of those conflicting antagonisms had been reconciled, and amity had given place to suspicion and distrust. It was the same with Italy and with Spain, while with those nations with whom there was no likelihood of any serious dispute the King had drawn the bands of friendship closer than before. Belgium and Germany were the only two countries with whom Great Britain could now be said to be at any divergence of opinion. With regard to Belgium, so long as Leopold II lived, the King would not consider amicable relations with a sovereign who was directly or indirectly responsible for the Congo atrocities, and with regard to Germany, Britain had made several attempts, and was about to make another, for the betterment of Anglo-German relations, but in almost every case they had been neutralised by the schemes of the Kaiser and his military advisers. The steadily increasing tension between Great Britain and Germany during the course of the King's reign was no fault of King Edward's, and the periods of strained relationship between him and his nephew followed, but did not precede, periods of strained relationships between these two countries. Personal differences and jealousies between monarchs may foster to a baleful degree ill feelings between their respective nations, but the time had passed when one nation allowed itself to come into conflict with another nation under the persuasion that it was its duty to join in the personal quarrels of its sovereign. There is no ground for the statement that King Edward encouraged his subjects to challenge Germany on the ground that he and his nephew were at times temperamentally at odds with one another. On the contrary, this record proves that the King lost no opportunity at any time of furthering the most cordial relations between his own country and the rest of Europe. His aim was peace and cordial co-operation.

CHAPTER XXV

EUROPEAN VISITS AND HOME POLITICS, 1908

I

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The King's love of foreign tours by no means diminished towards the end of his reign. On the contrary, the year 1908 marks the zenith of his travelling, and in this year he was absent from England no less than three months, visiting at various times, France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Spain, as well as Malta and Reval. Doubtless, Portugal also would have been included but for the assassination of the King of Portugal and the Crown Prince at Lisbon on 1st February. King Edward had long been friendly with this burly and genial monarch, who was a good sportsman and talented artist, though he suffered from lack of judgement in dealing with an admittedly corrupt administration in a poor and backward country.

During the previous year the struggles between the Portuguese political parties—monarchical, republican, and others—had paralysed the machinery of government, and as an attempt to cut the Gordian knot King Carlos had interfered with ministers and parliaments, finally recognising a dictator, Senhor Franco, who exercised autocratic control, ignoring the pretensions of all parties. King Carlos placed himself under the dictator's guidance and failed to recognise the gravity of the hostility which his subservience provoked.

On 1st February 1908, on returning to Lisbon from the Alentejo with his wife and his two sons, a group of Republican assassins fired at the open carriage with rifles. The King and his elder son, the Crown Prince and Duke of Braganza, were killed at once, and the second son Dom Manoel, was wounded in the arm. Queen Amélie, who endeavoured to interpose herself to save her

second son, was uninjured. The two actual murderers were at once slain by the escort and the police. The dictator, Franco, immediately resigned and fled to Genoa.

This dastardly outrage was a great shock to King Edward, who had only recently entertained his friend and cousin, King Carlos, in England, while Queen Amélie had been a prominent figure in the great assembly of royal personages at Windsor less than three months before. The King was greatly dejected at the sad news, and when, the following day, Sir Felix Semon expressed his profound indignation at the murder the King replied, "Yes, it is horrible—horrible. But I'll tell you something: a constitutional King must not do such things "[1]

By way of emphasising their intense sorrow and indignation the King and Queen and other members of the royal family attended not only a memorial service which was held next day at the King's wish, in St Paul's Cathedral, but defied precedent by attending a requiem mass at St. James's Church, Spanish Place, on 8th February, in memory of the murdered monarch. It was the first time that an English sovereign had attended a Roman Catholic service in Great Britain since the Reformation. The Protestant Alliance was thus furnished with an opportunity of announcing that it "viewed with astonishment and distress His Majesty's attendance at a Mass for the dead." The King, not unnaturally, disregarded the protest.

The disturbed state of Portugal thus precluded any visit during the years 1908 or 1909, but the King showed his heartfelt sympathy with the new boy-King of Portugal, Manoel II, by inviting him to Windsor in 1909 for a fortnight's stay. King Manoel eagerly accepted the invitation. In July he had welcomed the British squadron to the waters of the Tagus and he recognised in the King's invitation a courtesy which his country would regard with enthusiasm. "Je l'accepte avec joie," he wrote to the King, "et il me tarde de causer avec vous longuement. Je compte profiter de vos précieux conseils. Merci une fois de plus." At Windsor the King invested him with the Order of the Garter, greeting him at a state banquet on 16th November as "the heir of our oldest ally in history"

King Manoel was King Edward's last royal guest. There was some irony in the circumstance. King Manoel's royal career was

[1] Sir Felix Semon's Diary.

destined to be brief, and within five months of King Edward's death his subjects established a republic and drove him from his throne to seek an asylum in England.

II

The nation's sympathy with the royal family of Portugal on the death of King Carlos and the Crown Prince was fittingly reflected in an address to the Crown on February 4th, in which Parliament expressed its "indignation and deep concern" at the murders. The address was moved by the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. It was his first, and last, appearance in the House that session. He had been ailing for some months, and in the previous August the King had suggested as a remedy "a glass or two of champagne" and a stay at Balmoral at the end of September. Campbell-Bannerman accepted the King's invitation, and seemed to derive much benefit from the Highland air, and to his thanks "for so pleasant a visit" the King replied (October 3):

> Many thanks for your kind letter. I am very glad to hear that you enjoyed your stay here. The weather was certainly very favourable, and the Highland air will, I trust, have greatly benefited you in every way. It always does me more good than anything.

From Balmoral Sir Henry was setting out on a tour of political speech-making, and the press was speculating eagerly as to the Prime Minister's pronouncement on the House of Lords' position. The King warned him to remember that his own constitutional position as monarch was to some extent involved in the conflict between the two Houses, but the hint had small apparent effect on the speech with which Campbell-Bannerman opened the political campaign at Edinburgh on 5th October, when he threatened to appeal to the country unless the Lords ceased to reject Bills which the House of Commons had passed. On 14th November, after speaking at Bristol, a heart attack, which was attributed to overwork, caused some alarm, but it was stated that he recovered quickly, and on 27th November he left for Biarritz (which had been recommended by the King in preference to Cannes) where he began to recuperate in a most

hopeful manner. But he had lost ground during the past two years, and the Bristol attack was the first of an alarming series.

He returned from Biarritz to London on 20th January to preside at a cabinet council the next day, but not so improved in health as to be able to withstand the rigours of an English February. On 12th February he again presided at a cabinet meeting, and reported the details to the King. It was his last cabinet letter. Two days later he moved the vote of condolence to the new King of Portugal; but the stricken frame could no longer hold out, and on 15th February it was announced that the Prime Minister was suffering from influenza.

Already, two months previously, Campbell-Bannerman's place as head of the Liberal government had been practically occupied by Mr. Asquith, who now, on 17th February, in the absence of the Prime Minister and Lord Ripon, wrote his first cabinet letter to the King.

The King now urged that Campbell-Bannerman should take further medical advice, advocating that he should see Sir Thomas Barlow again (the King's own Physician Extraordinary) or send for Sir Thomas Lauder Brunton. The King's solicitude deeply touched the ailing statesman, and rather against his own inclinations he saw both Barlow and Brunton. Before leaving for Biarritz himself the King visited No. 10 Downing Street on 4th March, and had a genial interview with the Prime Minister, which gave Campbell-Bannerman the "utmost delight."

III

The King left London for Biarritz on 5th March, and next day in Paris saw President Fallières, as well as MM. Clemenceau and Pichon. In the course of the interview with M. Clemenceau he gave fresh signs of his interest in the welfare of France, which were warmly welcomed by the French ministers.

His usual stay in Biarritz, normally one of three weeks, was now extended to six weeks on the advice of his doctors. During the whole of the six weeks he maintained a strict incognito as Duke of Lancaster, and in order to avoid the strain of stair-climbing took a suite on the ground floor of the Hotel du Palais, instead of his usual first-floor suite. Here at Biarritz the King rapidly regained his lost health, and ten days after his arrival he wrote optimistically to Lady Londonderry:

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I am (*unberufen*) very flourishing, and have quite lost my cough. The sea air here and the glorious sun always agree wonderfully well with me. It is, however, a coast not suited to yachting. There are a great many pleasant people I know of varied nationalities, but not too many.

The "great many pleasant people" included Lady Troubridge, Sir Ernest Cassel, Mrs. (later Lady) Newman, and the Hon. Mrs. George Keppel, all of whom were frequently invited to dine with the King.

It was while at Biarritz that the King heard of the sudden death whilst hunting of Hugh Owen (Lady Londonderry's brother-in-law). "I was indeed shocked and grieved," the King wrote to Lady Londonderry on 18th March, "to hear of poor Hugh Owen's sudden death, very similar to the way poor Chesham was killed. These small fences produce often the most fatal results, and he was such a fine rider."

A week later, on 24th March, the King's old friend of over forty years' standing, the Duke of Devonshire, died of pneumonia at Cannes at the age of seventy-four. As Marquis of Hartington he had early won high political office and had narrowly missed the premiership in 1880. On many occasions the King and Queen had been the Duke's guests at Chatsworth and Bolton, and fully appreciated his sound common sense, absolute straightforwardness, and sincerity. "His character," it was said, "was a national asset," and the King, in offering his condolences to the relatives of the late Duke, paid a great tribute to his services to the state.

Meanwhile the King had heard with great concern of the growing illness and consequent political incapacity of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who was now anxious about his public position and wished to resign, but the King deprecated his resignation before Easter, and desired (March 19) that

in the event of Prime Minister's resignation or fatal crisis in illness, the King would like authoritative announcement made that before he left England it was settled that Mr. Asquith should at once come out to see His Majesty at Biarritz.

The King awaited eagerly the latest news of his friend, and was distressed to hear from Mr. Asquith at the end of March that Campbell-Bannerman's return to public life was not possible. In the same letter Mr. Asquith urged that the *status quo* could not

go on, that the "present uncertainty was demoralising," and that a cabinet reconstruction was necessary at once. The situation was, indeed, almost unparalleled in English history, the nearest approach to it being Lord Chatham's case one hundred and fifty years earlier. The office of Prime Minister had been in complete abeyance for more than a month, the government was without a head, and the situation was causing the gravest embarrassment. Sir Henry was unable to see his colleagues, or to attend to any public business, while Mr. Asquith was unable to speak with any authority except in current House of Commons work, and the most ridiculous rumours were being circulated. But the King did not think that the time had come for the Prime Minister's resignation, and suggested that Lord Knollys should see Mr. Asquith and impress upon him the importance of taking no decisive step until he had seen him. The King himself at that period was suffering from a recurrence of his old bronchial trouble, and it was only on medical advice that he continued his stay at Biarritz. Lord Knollys replied to the King that he had written in very cautious terms to Mr. Asquith concerning the proposed changes in the government, saying that the King could not commit himself to anything in any way until he had seen him and been able to discuss his proposals with him, but that in the meanwhile any such proposals would have the fullest consideration.

Great confusion and embarrassment was now being caused in the government. On all sides it was urged that Campbell-Bannerman should resign at once and that Asquith should take his place. Moreover, the elections of the new ministers would have to be completed before Parliament reassembled on 27th April, and delay of resignation would make this impossible under these circumstances. It was urged that the King would be placing himself in a false position if he pressed delay of resignation.

On 1st April Knollys wired to the King that the Prime Minister "will probably resign end of week," but the King replied that he was "most anxious that he should not resign till Easter vacation." That day, however, the Prime Minister sent a message of resignation to the King [1]

[1] Long before Campbell-Bannerman's resignation was discussed he had dictated a message to the King to be forwarded in case of a serious turn in his illness before resignation had been effected. In point of fact it was not forwarded until 12th May.

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"I am," he wrote (by means of his secretary), "conscious that the state of doubt and anxiety in which I am is most prejudicial to my health, and this to a large extent because I know how inconvenient and unpleasant the position must be to your Majesty. . . . I trust in seeking to be relieved of my position your Majesty will take into consideration my weakness, the great sense of responsibility which weighs upon me, and my anxiety as to the effect upon public affairs of my continued inability to discharge the duties of my office."

The King reluctantly accepted the Prime Minister's message as his resignation and telegraphed (April 3):

Have received your letter with sincere regret. Under the circumstances I have no other alternative but to accept your resignation, as I see it would be a relief to your mind, and would, I hope, help to improve your health when once the strain and anxiety of your position is removed. I shall, however, take no further steps with regard to your successor until I receive your formal submission which, I presume, you will send by messenger. I am writing by messenger leaving to-day.

The letter which followed ran:

My dear Sir Henry—It is with sincere regret that in your letter of the 1st inst. you inform me that it is your intention to place your resignation of the important and arduous post of Prime Minister in my hands.

Though I reluctantly agree to your wishes, I fully understand that the present state of your health renders it absolutely necessary that you should avoid all strain of the great amount of work which your high office entails upon you. I shall, of course, take no steps in appointing a successor until I receive your formal submission of resignation.

I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my sincere regret that the intercourse we have had with one another ever since you became Prime Minister is at an end, as it has always been a great pleasure and satisfaction to me to do business with you at all times.

Most sincerely do I hope that now you have ceased to bear the heavy responsibilities of your office, that your health may daily improve and that you may look forward for some years of quiet and comfort.

Believe me, my dear Sir Henry, yours very sincerely,

Edward R.

The Prime Minister telegraphed in reply the same day that he was

greatly relieved by your Majesty's most kind and gracious message which is only a fresh instance of your Majesty's unbounded consideration always shown me. I feel already more hopeful. I am sending submission by messenger to-night.

Two days later the formal submission arrived. Departing from constitutional tradition the King did not return to England, but that evening wrote in his own hand to Mr. Asquith, the Chancellor of the Exchequer :

The King has received a letter from the Prime Minister tendering his resignation of the important post he occupies, owing to the very precarious state of his health and also by the advice of the medical men who are attending him. Under these circumstances the King regrets that he has no other alternative but to accept the resignation, and has answered Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to that effect.

The King now calls on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to form a government, and will be glad to see him here at any time that he can conveniently come in order to hear from him what proposals he has to make.

The King's wish to see Mr. Asquith at Biarritz at once called forth critical protests Mr. Haldane protested that the debate on the Licensing Bill, which was due to commence on 6th April and would last four days, "would occasion great embarrassment to members on both sides were it broken by the necessary absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer," and he suggested that telegraphic intimation should be sent at once if the King wished to see Mr. Asquith, in which case the entire debate would be adjourned till after Easter. Major Ponsonby promptly telegraphed that the King had already written to Mr. Asquith asking him to come to Biarritz "at his convenience," and adding that "under the circumstances it would seem advisable to postpone debate on Licensing Bill."

The next day Mr. Asquith left London for Biarritz, where he saw the King on 8th April. He then resigned the Chancellorship and kissed hands on appointment as Prime Minister. Mr. Asquith had already made up his mind as to the redistribution of cabinet posts, and the King approved his suggestions that Mr. Lloyd George should become Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Lord Elgin should be promoted to a Marquisate (Lord Crewe taking his place at the Colonial Office), and that Mr. Morley and Sir H. Fowler should receive peerages. Lord

Tweedmouth was to be transferred to the Presidency of the Council, and Mr. McKenna was to take his place at the Admiralty. Mr. Winston Churchill was to be promoted to the cabinet as President of the Board of Trade (*vice* Lloyd George), a post which both his father and grandfather had occupied before him. These points being settled, Mr. Asquith left Biarritz the next day and arrived in London on 10th April. The cabinet changes met with general approval, but Lord Elgin by no means acquiesced in his own supersession, and refused the King's offer of a Marquisate.

Meanwhile strenuous objection had been taken by *The Times* and other newspapers to the King's appointing a Prime Minister on foreign soil on the ground that it was "an inconvenient and dangerous departure from precedent." The Liberal *Nation* endorsed the opinion, and there was a general feeling that the King had made a mistake in not coming to England—the first constitutional mistake he had made in seven years of sovereignty.

On 22nd April Campbell-Bannerman died. His death came somewhat unexpectedly at the last. At the funeral service on 27th April the King, who was then absent at Copenhagen, was represented by the Prince of Wales. Though not a statesman of the first rank Campbell-Bannerman had shown himself a tactful and excellent administrator and had led his party through an extremely difficult period. For three years he had enjoyed the King's personal regard—a regard that was well evidenced by His Majesty's kindly farewell visit to him on 4th March before he left for Biarritz.

IV

After a six weeks' stay at Biarritz the King returned to England on 16th April, and four days later he set out on a visit to the three Scandinavian sovereigns. The visits were dictated by diplomatic reasons. In the previous December the German Ambassador in London had announced his government's intention to make an agreement with Russia as to the territorial *status quo* in the Baltic. There was also an intention to bring in Sweden, but there was no desire to include Denmark. King Edward had protested with effect against the exclusion of Denmark, and on 23rd April 1908 there was signed, both in

St Petersburg and Berlin, an agreement between the four littoral Powers of the Baltic, Russia, Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, recognising "in principle" the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* in the Baltic The German government claimed for the agreement that it proved Germany's innocence of any design of annexation of the smaller Baltic States. At the same time as the Baltic convention was signed, the North Sea agreement was signed between Great Britain. France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, sanctioning a similar principle in regard to the North Sea. There was a general belief, in Germany and outside, that these agreements satisfied German susceptibilities as a counterblast to the understanding between France, Spain, England, and Italy as to the Mediterranean.

While the North Sea agreement was in process of arrangement it was decided that it would be advisable for the King to visit Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Christiania with a view to increasing international amity. The original arrangements were made in January 1908, but objection was made by the King of Sweden that the Swedish visit ought not to follow a visit to Norway, but rather should precede it. Sweden was very suspicious of Norway's prominence, and it was urged to the King by Sir Rennell Rodd (February 2) that King Gustav's position would be strengthened by the prior visit. For the moment the arrangements were cancelled owing to the assassination of the King and Crown Prince of Portugal; and to Sir Rennell Rodd's letter of 2nd February, in which he stated how gratified the King of Sweden was at the offer of a visit, the King added the comment:

> Better explain that owing to Portuguese tragedy we have had to postpone official visits to Denmark and Norway for the present, so that any visit to Sweden could not be contemplated at present. E.R.

On 11th February Rennell Rodd wrote again that the King's visit to Sweden was much looked for, and urged that the first visit paid by a British sovereign to Sweden would be "a great event" in the history of that nation. Finally, by 13th March all obstacles to the visit were removed, and the King minuted to Sir Rennell Rodd: "Everything is now happily settled; I arrive at Stockholm from Copenhagen on morning of 26th, and leave evening of 29th for Christiania."

King Edward VII
at the Franco-British Exhibition
May 1908

astic over the suggestion, made in July 1906, to hold a Franco-British Exhibition in the course of 1908. The enterprise was a private undertaking, and the King's first impression, on hearing of the proposed Exhibition, was conveyed to the Prime Minister in the remark: "Some danger of the entente cordiale being worn threadbare if these demonstrations are overdone." But long before the Exhibition was actually in being the King realised its international value, and his patronage did a great deal to ensure its success.

The King had insisted that the programme of M. Fallières' visit should follow the lines of M Loubet's visit of 1903. The President was welcomed at Victoria Station by the King and the Prince of Wales, lodged royally at St. James's Palace, banqueted at Buckingham Palace and at Marlborough House, sumptuously entertained in the City, applauded to the echo at the "Franco-British," and made the object of every polite attention at the hands of London's millions, who welcomed enthusiastically the serious-minded representative of their Gallic neighbours. When the President of the French Republic drove down St. James's Street alongside King Edward on the afternoon of his arrival, he looked as grave and smileless as a judge; on the following afternoon, at Shepherd's Bush, if he did not actually smile, his features relaxed, and, personally conducted by the King, he seemed to be enjoying himself in his serious way. Perhaps the fine collection of pictures had pleased him, as they might well have done, for there were some gems among them. King Edward and M. Fallières strolled leisurely and informally through some of the courts. The King did not bother the President by continually pointing out this and that; the two rulers sauntered along at their ease, the smiling sovereign in a single-breasted frock coat, debonair and *soigné*, M. Fallières in an overcoat, looking as if he appreciated the comparative calm of Shepherd's Bush after the boisterous welcome of the day before. One of the exhibits which attracted their attention was a picture of the then uncompleted Victoria Memorial, and as the King turned away he laughingly said, "We shall all be in our graves before it is finished!" M. Fallières must have remembered the words two years later.[1]

The banquet at Buckingham Palace was but one of many

[1] Edward Legge's *King Edward in his True Colours*, pp. 200-1.

such dinners that had taken place during the King's reign. On 21st May 1908 Sir Edward Grey had inquired of the King what he would say on that occasion and the King had replied, "I shall allude to entente cordiale and Franco-British Exhibition"—that was all, but the actual speech, in which the King dwelt on the strength and value of the Anglo-French entente and expressed the hopes that it might be permanent, was long remembered by those who were there on that occasion.

Following the visit of M. Fallières, the King's old friend, M. Delcassé, came to England on 21st June. He was received privately by the King on the morning of 24th June, and in view of German suspicions it was suggested by Sir Charles Hardinge that the announcement of his reception by the King should not appear in the Court Circular, but the King thought that in any case the news was bound to leak out and that its omission would occasion greater suspicion than its inclusion.

VI

King Edward had always been liked at the Russian Court, as in Republican Paris, and for the second time the idea was now mooted of an exchange of visits between the two sovereigns. This time it was the King himself who revived the suggestion of a meeting with the Tsar, and as the disturbed state of Russia rendered a visit to that country somewhat imprudent the King suggested they might meet in their yachts off Reval "next Whitsun," and that a visit to Copenhagen might be paid on the return journey. Early in May 1908 Sir E. Grey inquired if the King would proceed to Reval as arranged. "Certainly," replied the King, "the sooner the better, and I shall expect to reach Reval on 8th or 9th June."

Long before the visit, rumours had circulated in the press of both Paris and St. Petersburg that a new Triple Alliance between England, France, and Russia was in course of preparation, and so credible were these rumours that Sir E. Grey deemed it advisable to state in the Commons on 27th May that King Edward's journey to Russia was an official visit on the lines of those official visits that the King had paid to other sovereigns, and that there was no intention of contracting any new treaty with Russia.

The proposed visit was warmly welcomed in Russia both by

Tsarists and Liberals The President of the Duma sent through Reuter's agency a message to the British people declaring that the King's visit was both opportune and natural, now that representative government in Russia was set on a firm and permanent basis The arrival of the King filled him and the Third Duma, as a national Parliament, "with sincere and patriotic affection" But opinion in England was by no means so united. The Radical and Labour M P.'s regarded the visit as unjustified in view of the internal state of Russia, and there was a growing popular impatience, of which the King was hardly conscious, with the Tsar's autocratic methods of government and a corresponding sympathy with the revolutionary movement. Towards the end of May an article by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, headed "An Insult to our Country," appeared in the *Labour Leader* The writer described the Tsar as a "common murderer," and objected to the King, as the head of a state which prided itself on its constitutional freedom, "hobnobbing with a blood-stained creature" like the Tsar. Mr. MacDonald appealed to the members of the Independent Labour Party at their next meetings to see that a resolution was put calling upon the King to "cancel his engagement to meet the Tsar and to refrain from injuring the feelings of his people" A few days later the Labour Party in the House of Commons, together with a number of Liberal members, signed a memorial for transmission to the King objecting to his proposed visit to Russia being a "state" visit.

Sir Charles Hardinge, writing to the King on 30th May, described Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's article as "a scandalous production." He had shown it to Sir E. Grey, who remarked that "it is all the more necessary to thrash this out in the House." The outcome was a debate in Parliament on 4th June, just before the Whitsun adjournment. On that day Mr. James O'Grady,[1] moving a reduction of the Foreign Office vote, insisted on the strong feeling among the middle and working classes against the visit being official and paid in state. Mr. O'Grady and Mr. Keir Hardie, both speaking with perfect good feeling as far as the King personally was concerned, called attention to the exile and imprisonment of members of the first two Dumas, the execution of political prisoners, and the number of suspects sent to

[1] The member for East Leeds (1906–18) and S E. Leeds (1918–24). Afterwards Sir James O'Grady, K.C M.G , O.B.E., Governor of Tasmania.

Siberia without trial. The visit, they argued, should either not take place, or be divested of its state character. Sir E. Grey, in reply, declared that the King's foreign visits were beneficial to the state, and repeated his previous statement that no treaty or convention with Russia was contemplated. The visit signified the existence of friendly relations and the desire to continue them. Friendship with Russia was part of his foreign policy, and unfriendliness would lead to war. To postpone the King's visit would be a discourtesy. The government believed that the King's visit would smooth the path of diplomacy, and to divest it of its official character would be to put a deliberate insult on the Russian government which the Russian people would bitterly resent. Grey spoke with animation and was approved by Mr. Balfour, who deprecated criticism of the internal affairs of foreign countries. Keir Hardie, however, contended that the official visit condoned the "atrocities" of the Tsar's government, for which the Tsar was responsible, and only withdrew the word "atrocities" with great reluctance. The reduction of the vote was rejected by 225 to 59 votes, and the House then adjourned for the Whitsuntide recess.

The suggestion that he was "condoning atrocities" in Russia moved the King's resentment. He acknowledged no connection between a visit to a royal kinsman and any phase of current political agitation. The unrest in Russia was no direct concern of his, and only awoke in him sympathy with the ruler whose life it oppressed. The King resented the action of the twelve Liberals, twenty-two Nationalists, and twenty-five Labour members who voted in the minority on 4th June, and unwisely withheld invitations to a royal garden party on 20th June from three of the members who had thus voted, and from a fourth member whose financial reputation was not of the best. The three were Mr. Keir Hardie, the leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Victor Grayson, an independent member, and Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, who had recently been elected Liberal member for Stirling, in succession to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

Neither of the three paid much attention to the incident at first, thinking there was probably some error. But when Mr. Arthur Ponsonby discovered it had been done very deliberately, and at the King's orders, the incident assumed larger proportions. "It was no longer a private affair, but an

insult to my constituents and an attempt by the sovereign to influence votes of members by social pressure. Keir Hardie also had been inclined to let the matter pass as an entirely unimportant incident. But when I put it to him that it was not a personal matter, but an official aspersion on our constituencies, he agreed, and deliberated with his colleagues as to what course should be taken."[1] The press took up the matter with embarrassing eagerness, and the whole incident became embroidered out of all proportion.

On 23rd June Keir Hardie demanded bluntly of Knollys why his own name was "purposely omitted" from the list of guests invited to the garden party at Windsor on the 20th, but the reply, unfortunately, is not available. On 9th July the Labour Party passed a resolution denouncing the omissions as an "attempt by the Court to influence Members of Parliament," and they requested the Lord Chamberlain to remove all their names from the official list of royal guests until Mr. Keir Hardie's name was restored to it. On 14th July Keir Hardie, speaking to his constituents at Merthyr Tydfil, said that the King had been outside politics since the days of Charles I, and that he had better remain outside!

The King's irritation soon passed away, and he restored Mr. Keir Hardie's and Mr. Grayson's names, but declined to include that of Mr. Ponsonby, whose offence was greater in the King's eyes because he had been born and bred in the purple Mr. Alexander Murray, the head Government Whip, now took up the cudgels on behalf of Ponsonby, and confidentially informed Lord Knollys of "the facts of the case," hoping that it might mitigate the King's "very just resentment" at Ponsonby's action. He pointed out that Ponsonby felt very strongly that the government had given the King bad advice to proceed to Russia at the moment when members of the Duma were suffering imprisonment, and he voted against the government because he thought they had placed the King in a false position. No disloyalty was intended and Ponsonby had conscientiously voted as he thought the occasion demanded. He had "no intention," he wrote to Lord Knollys, of making "a personal attack on the King." He considered a visit from the King to be "the greatest compliment we can pay to foreign government," and he appreciated "very

[1] Stewart's *Life of Keir Hardie*, pp. 267-8.

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highly the exceptional position the King has made for himself as a strong influence for international peace." The King was shown Ponsonby's letter the next day and added the comment: "I accept Mr. A. Ponsonby's explanation and regrets expressed in his letter and look upon the incident as closed."

The incident subjected the King to a great deal of ill-advised correspondence. Some wrote that the King was quite right to exclude "traitors"—others attacked him for ostracising those who were opposed to his visit to the "weakest and most contemptible of Europe's crowned heads." But with the King's withdrawal of his ban against Mr. Arthur Ponsonby the correspondence ceased.

It was only the second occasion during the reign on which the King invited any public suspicion of misinterpreting his constitutional position. The criticism to which he was subjected on this occasion was due to a misunderstanding of the character of his foreign tours, but the interpellation was no infringement of public right.

VII

On 5th June 1908 King Edward, with Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria, left Port Victoria on board the *Victoria and Albert*, escorted by warships, to pay the long-expected visit to the Tsar. The suite included Admiral Sir John Fisher, General Sir John French, Sir Arthur Nicolson, the Ambassador at Petersburg (who had been in England on leave), and Sir Charles Hardinge, with Major Frederick Ponsonby as private secretary. Hardinge had so much work to do that he asked leave to bring with him his own secretary, Viscount Errington.

The journey to Kiel was extremely rough. Everybody on board was more or less ill, the yacht having a very unpleasant motion. Both the King and Queen were good sailors, and stood the voyage better than some of the old sea-dogs. That evening only the King and four others appeared at dinner!

Kiel was reached on 7th June and the royal party were met by Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia. At the entrance to the Kiel Canal masses of troops were assembled, and the King landed to inspect the guard of honour. After a short stay they left for Reval escorted by a division of German destroyers for some distance from the harbour. The smart appearance of the whole

of the German North Sea fleet, lying at anchor in the port, gave food for reflection upon the recent German naval programme of construction, while the intricate evolutions of the torpedo flotilla, which excited the admiration of all the naval officers on board the royal yacht, served as a useful object-lesson of the efficiency of the German navy.[1]

The King and Queen arrived off Reval on Tuesday morning, 9th June. In delightful weather the Tsar, the Imperial family, and the Queen of the Hellenes at once visited their royal guests, who returned the visit on board the Imperial yacht. At the state banquet in the evening on board the *Standart*, at which Benckendorff, Isvolsky, and Stolypin were present, stress was laid on the Anglo-Russian agreement as drawing the two countries together and consolidating the peace of the world. The Tsar, in proposing the health of the King and Queen, said :

It is with feelings of the deepest satisfaction and pleasure that I welcome your Majesty and her Majesty the Queen to Russian waters. I trust that this meeting, while strengthening the many and strong ties which unite our houses, will have the happy results of drawing our countries closer together, and of promoting and maintaining the peace of the world In the course of the past year several questions of equal moment both to Russia and to England have been satisfactorily settled by our governments. I am certain that your Majesty appreciates as highly as I do the value of the agreements, for, notwithstanding their limited scope, they cannot but help to spread among our two countries feelings of mutual good will and confidence. I drink to the health of your Majesty and of the Queen, and to the prosperity of the Royal Family and of the British nation

The King, as usual, made an impressive and eloquent extempore speech :

I thank your Majesty most heartily on behalf of the Queen and myself for the cordial manner in which you have welcomed us in the waters of the Baltic and for the affectionate words in which you have proposed our healths. I have the happiest recollections of the welcome which I received on the occasions of my previous visit to Russia at the hands of your illustrious grandfather, your beloved father, and yourself, and it is a source of the sincerest gratification to me to have this opportunity of meeting your Majesties again. I most heartily endorse every

[1] Hardinge's report, 12th June 1908, printed in Viscount Grey's *Memoirs*.

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word that fell from your Majesty's lips with regard to the Convention recently concluded between our two Governments. I believe it will serve to knit more closely the bonds that unite the peoples of our two countries, and I am certain that it will conduce to the satisfactory settlement in an amicable manner of some momentous questions in the future. I am convinced that it will not only tend to draw our two countries more closely together but will help very greatly towards the maintenance of the general peace of the world. I hope this meeting may be followed before long by another opportunity of meeting your Majesties. I drink to the health of your Majesties; to that of the Empress Marie Feodorovna, and the members of the Imperial family, and, above all, to the welfare and prosperity of your great Empire.

The King's speech was impromptu; the Tsar's was written beforehand and accessible to the press. Before the banquet. Russian journalists and others asked for a copy of the King's speech. The King said he knew what he should say, but had nothing written. When Fisher expressed surprise at the lack of an *aide-memoire*, the King told him that he did learn a speech off by heart when President Loubet came to England. He memorised it in the garden of Buckingham Palace, but when he got up to speak could not remember it, "and had to keep on beginning again at the beginning." So "Never again!" [1]

During the course of the visit the King had several interviews with M. Stolypin, the Tsar's chief Minister, "a grave, splendid-looking man with a long beard," and M. Isvolsky, which created the best possible impression on both sides. Of Stolypin the King had learned much from Sir Donald Wallace's correspondence, and from Sir Arthur Nicolson's conversations, and when monarch and minister discussed Russian matters in the course of an interview lasting an hour, Stolypin expressed his surprise at His Majesty's acquaintance with Russian internal affairs, and afterwards told Hardinge that the King "fascinated" him. "It was not only what he said but his manner bore the impression of an artist in international politics whom Europe regarded as first statesman in Europe." Hardinge, for his part, had several opportunities of discussing with M. Isvolsky the various questions of foreign policy, and they came to an agreement about the reforms to be conceded by Turkey to Macedonia, which was

[1] Fisher's *Memories*, p. 236.

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seething more and more with tyranny and revolt, brigandage and outrage, a ceaseless peril to the peace of Europe. Isvolsky struck Hardinge as a very able and adroit man, but extremely timid.

Although he tried hard to make me commit myself on the Macedonian question beyond the limit of authority which was given to me, any suggestion which I made to him was at once set aside as requiring careful study. He was, however, very friendly throughout [1]

The King in conversation with the Tsar touched upon family affairs only, and political matters were not mentioned. The Tsar and Tsaritza showed manifest pleasure at meeting the King again, after so long an interval of trial and misfortune. Some of the Tsar's suite commented upon the marked difference in the Tsar's spirits and attitude during the King's visit to Reval, compared to what they were at the German Emperor's recent visit to Swinemunde, where the Tsar " felt anxiety all the time as to what might be unexpectedly sprung upon him."

On the evening of the 10th the Tsar and Tsaritza dined with the King After dinner the two monarchs and their suites stood on deck while a Russian choral society (mostly ladies) on another steamer sang weird Russian songs. Some of the King's suite were nervous as to the nearness of the steamer, and inquiries were made as to whether it was quite safe. The head of the Russian police, however, replied that there was no danger at all. He had given orders that all the singers were to be " stripped and searched " before they were allowed to come on board the steamer. This quite upset one or two members of the King's suite, who feared that if the " stripping and searching " were known in England there might be " questions in the House."

On the second day of the visit, when the King was on board the Imperial yacht *Standart*, the King appointed the Emperor an Admiral of the Fleet in the British navy. The Emperor was immensely pleased at the unexpected honour, and at the official banquet in the evening, to the accompaniment of a salute from the British cruisers, the King proposed the Emperor's health as an Admiral of the Fleet. It was a pathetic and perhaps ironic incident to those who recalled the self-confidence of the large Russian fleet which set sail for Japan in 1904, and of which the

[1] Hardinge's report, 12th June 1908, published in Grey's *Memoirs*.

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sole surviving ship lay at anchor at Reval alongside the Emperor's yacht. The Emperor, rising to reply to the King's toast with great modesty and apparent diffidence, paid the King a counter-compliment by asking His Majesty to do him the honour of becoming an Admiral "of our young and growing fleet," and as the King warmly accepted the honour, the guns of the Emperor's yacht saluted the new Russian Admiral.[1] It was a fitting ending to a satisfactory visit which had changed the atmosphere of Russian feeling towards England from suspicion to cordial trust. The Franco-British Entente Cordiale had broadened into the Triple Entente. King Edward again spoke for his ministers, and cordial relations were cemented between the two long alienated countries.

But the British government were by no means so pleased at the creation of another Admiral, and the opinion was expressed that the King had been rushed into it by Fisher, which brought the characteristic comment from him: "It's a jolly good thing we have a King who knows how to act, as cabinet ministers seem to me always like frightened rabbits!"

VIII

As soon as the King's visit to Reval was announced urgent appeals reached the King from various interested quarters to help their causes in his intercourse with the Tsar. An earnest letter dated 3rd June, addressed to the King, came from the three brothers, Lord Rothschild, Mr. Alfred Rothschild, and Mr. Leopold Rothschild, pointing out the recrudescence of the attacks on the Jews in Russia of recent years and begging the King's intervention in the Jews' behalf with the Tsar. Lord Knollys replied (June 3, 1908):

The King desires me to let you know, in reply to the letter which you, Alfred and Leo, have written to him, that he will speak to Sir Charles Hardinge and Sir Arthur Nicolson respecting the question which you have brought before him.

The subject would be a very delicate one for him to bring before the Emperor of Russia, and it is, moreover, one of considerable political importance.

[1] Hardinge's report.

His Majesty feels, therefore, that it would not be constitutionally correct or proper for him to speak to the Emperor or to his advisers on the matter unless he did so with the full concurrence of Sir C Hardinge and Sir Arthur Nicolson, both of whom accompany him to Reval

In the event, after speaking to Hardinge and Nicolson, the King decided that he might raise the question in a general conversation with the Russian Prime Minister on Russian internal affairs. This he did (June 13) without alluding specifically to the Rothschilds, and the reference was well received. A week later Hardinge wrote to Lord Rothschild at the King's command enclosing an extract of a report made by Sir Arthur Nicolson of an interview which he had at Reval with M. Stolypin, and at which, by the King's request, he raised the question of the treatment of the Jews in Russia

"From this report," he added, "you will see that the Prime Minister contemplates legislation for the amelioration of the lot of the Jews in Russia, and in view of M. Stolypin's assurance in this sense, the King did not consider desirable that anything further should be said on the subject at present, until at least it is seen whether the intentions of the Prime Minister are carried into effect"

Meanwhile Sir Ernest Cassel had sent the King a memorandum about the proposed Russian loan. It was an abuse of the King's friendliness to ask his influence in a financial transaction of which neither he nor the government had been informed. But the King did ask the Emperor to receive Cassel in the event of the financier going to Russia.

Another request was made by Sir Henry Burdett that the King should speak to the Emperor in favour of a concession for an American firm. The King, however, took the view that such a concession might involve an injury to British firms, and Burdett was tactfully informed that his proposal was not welcomed.

One result to which the Reval visit was held to contribute was the formation in October 1908 of the Russo-English Chamber of Commerce at St. Petersburg, which was joined by leading members of the Duma and the Council of the Empire. The hope was expressed that Anglo-Russian trade, which had lately been on the decline, would thus grow.

But another result was to force the growth of the German

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legend known as King Edward's encirclement policy. As a result of the King's many interviews with European sovereigns the legend spread like a banyan tree. That apparently sensible, adroit, and very well-dressed gentleman, the King of England, was really an ogre who sought with incredible astuteness and success to build a ring of steel around Germany! Rumour had it that he had at Cartagena formed an Anglo-Franco-Spanish entente; rumour added a little later that Italy had been drawn into the Mediterranean compact. Rumour had it that at Ischl the King tried to detach the aged Austrian Emperor from the Triple Alliance. Finally, rumour had it that the King and the Tsar at Reval had concerted measures against Germany. In each and very case rumour lied.

But Dame Rumour had a difficult task to excel the Kaiser, who, when Metternich reported to the Chancellor on 25th June that "the great mass of English people desire peace, and that this is King Edward's policy," added the marginal note: "Untrue. He aims at war. I am to begin it, so that he does not get the odium."[1] But Metternich was right. King Edward was utterly for peace. Britain under the extreme democratic coalition, Liberal-Labour-Irish, was incapable of aggression and even of thorough resolution in defence. Again, Britain was not bound by any hard-and-fast engagement to side with France in case of war, but scrupulously reserved her right to judge of the circumstances. The consent of a cabinet and of a House of Commons, each containing strong pro-German influences, would first have to be won.

Britain and France, living under the deepening shadow of an incalculable and only half-realised danger, were trying to increase their safeguards by eliminating old enmities, by extending friendships. Those who saw in the King's round of visits to European sovereigns signs of the hemming in of Germany conveniently forgot that King Edward, during the course of his reign, had more meetings with the Kaiser than with any other crowned head in Europe.

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxv. ii. p. 479.

CHAPTER XXVI

ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1908

I

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THE more cordial Anglo-German relations which seemed to be established in 1906 and 1907 were not destined to last, and the first rift in the lute was caused by the pronounced determination of Germany to rival England in sea-power, which began to reach the climax early in 1908. Immediately after entering upon office in December 1905 the new Liberal government had offered to make a friendly naval compromise with Germany, upon the basis of a settled relative strength of 5 to 3. This offer, though supported by the German Ambassador in London, Count Metternich, was imprudently refused by the Kaiser and Admiral Tirpitz, as the proposals of the Unionist government for an Anglo-German entente had been almost insolently declined through Bulow and Holstein in 1901. To prove its moderation, the new Liberal government proceeded to reduce somewhat the rate, and in the same limited measure to interrupt the regularity, of British naval construction. In February 1907, for instance, there was a reduction of £427,000 in the Naval Estimates although the two-power standard was maintained. The German law, on the contrary, worked with undeviating fixity.

Many English publicists were much alarmed by the government's declared intention to reduce expenditure on the fighting forces in order to have more money available for social reform, and the policy of the Admiralty was now vigorously attacked in the Conservative press. Its main criticism was directed against the further weakening of the Channel fleet. On the 4th July Lord Tweedmouth assured Parliament that Great Britain had 39 battleships against America's 18, Germany's 11, France's 13,

and Japan's 9; in other words, England was in respect of capital ships well in advance of the two-power standard, and almost approaching a three-power standard. The alarmists, however, still continued active although they received no support from the opposition leaders. Sir John Fisher, the First Sea Lord, in spite of his energetic devotion to naval efficiency, was currently believed to have yielded to the government's policy of retrenchment. There was little truth in the popular allegation, but some credit was given to it in court circles, and the opinion was vigorously expressed that it would be worth while losing the services of "Jacky" Fisher in order to have the Channel fleet restored to its former strength. The King listened attentively to all expressions of opinion, but his faith in Fisher never wavered. He believed that his naval policy really put the British fleet in a position to meet Germany's attack in the event of war. There is not the slightest doubt that but for King Edward's unwavering support Sir John Fisher would have been unable to go through with his plans.

II

In the meantime there had been germinating within the British naval service the seeds of a bitter quarrel between some of the fighting heads. The King's old friend, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean fleet, was by his impetuosity antagonising many of his colleagues, while Sir John Fisher by his blunt outspokenness was by no means tending to smooth over matters.

The economies in the Naval Estimates of 1907, of which Fisher approved, gave Beresford and other naval commanders the opportunity of a side attack upon Fisher. In public Beresford stated that the government's naval programme was below the needs of the nation and that Germany's plans for invasion were well mapped out and complete. Fisher, with his buoyant confidence in the new Dreadnoughts and the rearrangement of the fleets, deemed the agitation unjustified, and his professional jealousy was excited when he found that Beresford was openly associating with the naval extremists who were challenging the policy of the Liberal government. Hence a battle royal followed between Fisher on the one hand and Beresford with Sir

G. Clarke on the other. On 16th September 1907 and in subsequent letters Fisher, who was holiday-making in the Tyrol, pointed out to the King that there was a conspiracy with which Beresford was associated to make out that invasion of England by Germany was feasible and projected Fisher believed that the conspiracy was engineered with the objects of harassing the government and of making Beresford "Admiralissimo," and he did not hesitate to label the arguments of his opponents as "a simple rechauffé of the mendacious drivel of that halfpenny rag the *Daily Express*. . . ."

When Your Majesty backed up the First Sea Lord against unanimous naval feeling against the Dreadnought . . . it just simply shut up the mouths of the revilers as efficiently as those lions were kept from eating Daniel, *and they would have eaten me but for your Majesty.*

The King read with keen interest the lively admiral's effusions and added the autograph note on a series of papers which Fisher sent him from Levico:

The printed letters are both interesting and amusing, and the language decidedly forcible. My son should see them but he must treat them as confidential. Anyhow, it is high time the gallant Admiral returned to his post, he has been away too long in the Swiss mountains.

The relations between Fisher and Beresford were now further complicated by a quarrel breaking out between Fisher and Rear-Admiral Sir Percy Scott, who was also antagonistic to Beresford. These three were among the most prominent sailors England possessed at the time: Fisher was in the dominating position as First Sea Lord, Beresford commanded the Channel fleet; and Scott had recently (1905) been promoted to be Rear-Admiral and Inspector of Target Practice to the fleet—a promotion which the King regarded as "a very good appointment." For several months—perhaps a year—there had been a covert antagonism between these three, but early in July 1908 an incident occurred that could not be ignored. Beresford, who had Scott serving under him as Commander of the 1st cruiser squadron, signalled to the *Argyle* and the *Good-Hope* of Scott's squadron to turn towards one another, in a way which might have produced

disaster like that of the sinking of the *Victoria* by the *Camperdown* in 1893. Scott disobeyed the order, and a virulent controversy followed, which led to "questions in the House." Mr. Asquith and Mr. McKenna deprecated the importance popularly attached to the controversy, and declared that they would prevent all compromising of naval discipline. The matter was again referred to in the adjourned debate on the Naval Estimates on 13th July; but it was intimated that the dissensions had been exaggerated and were abating. It was clear that too much had been made of the incident, and shortly afterwards it was announced that Sir Percy Scott would take command of the cruiser squadron to be sent to South Africa.

In the August of 1908 the King and Queen visited the Channel fleet—a visit which did not meet with Fisher's approval—and in reply to a letter from Lord Charles Beresford, who was in command, wrote (August 8):

My dear Lord Charles Beresford—Let me express my warmest thanks for your letter of 7th instant, which reached me this morning before our departure from Cowes.

I can only repeat what I said to you yesterday, the great pleasure and satisfaction which it gave the Queen and myself to visit the Channel Squadron under your command. You may indeed be proud to command such a splendid Fleet, and their appearance and efficiency made a deep impression on all who saw them.

I instructed Lord Knollys to write to the Admiralty to express my great satisfaction, and all the arrangements you made yesterday for our reception were admirable in every respect.

Trusting that nothing may occur to prevent your continuing to hold the high and important position which you now occupy.

Believe me, Very sincerely yours,

Edward R. & I.

But although the King hoped that nothing would occur to prevent Beresford "continuing to hold the high and important position" of Commander of the Channel fleet, the growing tension between Fisher and Beresford finally resulted in Beresford's retirement from his command, and the incorporation of the Channel fleet with the Home fleet.

On 15th February 1909 the announcement was made public that Lord Charles Beresford would retire from the command of the Channel fleet on 24th March, after a two years' service in

that post, three being the normal term. Fisher was elated and jubilantly wrote to Lord Knollys (December 22, 1908):

It may be useful for the King to know exactly how this Beresford crisis has been precipitated, and I am so *very very* glad that His Majesty is so quite apart from it *all and can remain apart from it all*! Beresford's removal is a purely administrative act carried out entirely on the First Lord's own initiative and on his own sole responsibility with the full sanction of the Prime Minister! This is the brief history of the case. Since the Manœuvres in that Summer there have been numerous interviews between McKenna and Beresford. . . McKenna, as a pure civilian, saw the unfitness of Beresford for War Command and must get rid of him, so he invented the two years' letter applying to both Beresford and Bridgeman, so the three fleets at home—the Channel fleet, the Home fleet, and the Atlantic fleet—are all three now made 2 years' appointments

Beresford now altered his line of attack, and protested in long letters to Mr. Asquith against the new distribution of the fleet and against service inefficiencies. In writing to the King on 19th April 1909 Mr. Asquith pointed out that in view of the gravity of the allegations made by Lord Charles Beresford to him about naval matters he thought it right to offer an immediate inquiry. He proposed that the inquiry should be made by a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, over which he would preside and of which the Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Arthur Wilson, "whose authority in the navy is probably greater than that of any other officer," would be a member. The inquiry would be conducted in private, and Lord Charles Beresford and the Admiralty would present their respective cases. The suggestion had been made that Beresford would be rewarded for his past services by a peerage, but "in the circumstances Mr. Asquith ventures to think that the moment would not be an opportune one."

The King received the Prime Minister's letter while on his Mediterranean cruise, and immediately replied from Catania, Sicily (April 25, 1909):

My dear Prime Minister—I thank you for your letter of the 19th inst., sending me copies of Admiral Lord Charles Beresford's letter of 2nd inst. to you, and yours of the 14th inst. in reply to him, which I have kept.

I cannot deny that Lord Charles Beresford severely censures the Board of Admiralty, but especially the 1st Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Fisher, in unmeasured terms, and the answers to the different points mentioned will greatly interest me to read.

As you say, the allegations are of so grave a nature that your proposal that an inquiry should be made by a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, over which you would preside, meets with my highest approval. The appointment of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Arthur Wilson, to be a member of the Committee is an excellent one, as his views will be of the greatest value being one of the most distinguished Officers of the Navy.

I feel sure that the First Lord of the Admiralty and his colleagues feel, after Lord Charles Beresford's letter, that there is no other alternative but to have an inquiry into all the points he raises.

I entirely agree also with your views that this is not the proper moment for recommending Lord Charles for any mark of distinction.

Believe me, sincerely yours,

EDWARD R.

But although both the King and Mr. Asquith had cordially approved the appointment of Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson as a member of the sub-committee which was investigating the Beresford allegations, Beresford himself objected, and Sir Arthur Wilson was not appointed to the committee.[1] The turn of events exasperated Fisher, who viewed the proposed committee as an opportunity for Beresford to vilify him, and threatened resignation, but the King advised him (April 20) to retain office "in spite of all," and not to think of resigning "even under pressure." Six days later, on hearing that Beresford had objected to Wilson being on the committee and that in consequence he had not been appointed, the King wrote to Mr. Asquith from Naples (May 1):

The King regrets that the sub-committee did not add Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson (as he wanted). He would not only have been of the greatest help in bringing technical points to the notice of the members, but his high reputation in the Navy would also have strengthened the committee and given confidence to the public generally.

[1] The sub-committee eventually consisted of Mr. Asquith, Sir E. Grey, Lord Crewe, Mr. Haldane, and Lord Morley.

Mr. Asquith in reply pointed out that he had originally intended to ask Sir Arthur Wilson to serve on the sub-committee, but on going closely into the matter he found that he "would not be regarded as altogether an impartial judge." He had been Admiral Lord Charles Beresford's immediate predecessor in the command of the Channel fleet, and Beresford had recorded, "in documents known to Sir A Wilson, various caustic criticisms on his ideas of strategy, etc." But he pointed out that although Sir Arthur Wilson was not on the sub-committee, "we shall submit all the evidence to him, call him as a witness, and of course attach the greatest weight to his opinion."

Finally, the sub-committee, after taking evidence from Beresford at twelve meetings and submitting it to Sir Arthur Wilson, reported on 13th August 1909. The opinion of the Board of the Admiralty, which was also invited, was in direct contradiction to Lord Charles Beresford's statement. The Board insisted on the overwhelming superiority and reserve strength of the British navy, and on the rapid mobilisation and efficiency of the nucleus crews and ships. The sub-committee, after a careful consideration of all the facts, was satisfied that there was no dangerous deficiency, and in conclusion declared that no danger to the country had resulted during the time in question from the Admiralty arrangements for war. Arrangements, "defensible in themselves, but not ideally perfect," were hampered by the absence of cordial relations between Lord Charles Beresford and the Admiralty. It was intimated that there were faults on both sides, a conclusion with which the King was not slow to agree.

III

Sir John Fisher's rearrangement of the British naval forces had caused no little perturbation in Germany, and Fisher, as he himself expressed it, had become "the most hated man in Germany . . . if not the best hated man over here as well." The German reply was the Third Naval Act, by which German naval expenditure was increased in the 1908 estimates by some 20 per cent. By 1914 it was estimated that the German navy would consist of 37 battleships, including 13 Dreadnoughts, and

would thus seriously rival the British fleet. There was never any doubt in Fisher's mind that the growing strength of the German navy was designed in due time to challenge England's naval supremacy and ultimately to bring it to an end. This view the Admiral pressed with unceasing vigour on the King, with whom he was in constant intercourse, and although the King, with his customary sagacity, often reproved Fisher for the incautious exuberance of his language, he admitted the force of his general argument.

In the spring of 1908 Fisher confided to the King a cherished plan of attacking and destroying the German fleet suddenly in the absence of any declaration of war, citing the precedent of his hero Nelson, who on 1st April 1801 had attacked and defeated the Danish fleet in the harbour of Copenhagen. The King promptly refused to countenance any such idea of "Copenhagening" the German fleet, which was utterly opposed to his own views on international relations, and Fisher's final comment was a lament "that we possessed neither a Pitt nor a Bismarck to give the order." [1]

Admiral von Tirpitz described British fears of the growing German fleet as purely imaginary. The British press took a different view, and the Kaiser determined to strive to allay British fears. With characteristic clumsiness he wrote in his own hand to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Tweedmouth, explaining the innocence of the new German Naval Act.

The immediate cause of the Kaiser's letter was a letter from Lord Esher to the founders of the Imperial Maritime League which was published in *The Times* on 6th February 1908. In response to the League's invitation to allow his name to appear as a member, Lord Esher had replied that to most of the objects of the League no one could take exception :

> but its immediate aim is a "public inquiry" into the state of the navy. You ask me to join a body of persons, all actuated no doubt by honourable and patriotic motives, who are engaged in promoting a scheme designed to overturn one of the Prime Minister's principal colleagues and a Board of Admiralty nominated by him.

Obviously such an inquiry would indicate want of confidence

[1] Fisher's *Memories*, pp. 4-5.

in the Admiralty. Esher could not believe, as the founders of the League apparently believed, that the government had most dangerously reduced the efficiency of the navy as a fighting force. "I suppose," he added, "you honestly think that Sir John Fisher and the Sea Lords have lent themselves to so indefensible an enterprise." Could he believe that, he would be glad to see Fisher and his colleagues suffer the fate of Admiral Byng; but he could not believe it. The letter ended with the words: "There is not a man in Germany, from the Emperor downwards, who would not welcome the fall of Sir John Fisher, and for this reason only, apart from all others, I must beg to decline your invitation to join the council of the Maritime League."

The Kaiser thought that a direct response to this letter, written to Lord Tweedmouth, would allay British fears. The lengthy letter that followed, coming from any normal man, must have been hypocritical, but as a product of the Kaiser's badly balanced mind may have been sincere. In this letter[1] the Kaiser urged that it was "nonsensical and untrue that the German Naval Bill is to provide a navy meant as a challenge to British naval supremacy," and that it was merely an adequate protection of German overseas interest.

In the letter Lord Esher caused to be published a short time ago he wrote "that every German from the Emperor down to the last man wished for the downfall of Sir John Fisher." Now, I am at a loss to tell whether the supervision of the foundations and drains of the Royal Palaces is apt to qualify somebody for the judgement of Naval affairs in general. As far as regards German Naval affairs the phrase is a piece of unmitigated balderdash, and has created an immense merriment in the circles of those "who know" here. . . . It is therefore preposterous to infer that German authorities work for or against persons in official positions in foreign countries, it is as ridiculous as it is untrue, and I hereby repudiate such a calumny. Besides, to my humble notion this perpetual quoting of the "German Danger" is utterly unworthy of the great British nation with its world-wide Empire and its mighty Navy. There is something nearly ludicrous about it. The foreigners in other countries might easily conclude that the Germans must be an exceptionally

[1] Published in full in the *Morning Post*, 30th October 1914, and in *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv. p. 32 *seq.*

strong lot, as they seem to be able to strike terror into the hearts of the British, who are 5 times their superiors! . . .

Once more. The German Naval Bill is not aimed at England, and is not a "challenge to British Supremacy of the Sea," which will remain unchallenged for generations to come. Let us remember the warning Admiral Sir John Fisher gave to his hearers in November when he so cleverly cautioned them not to get scared by using the admirable phrase, "If Eve had not always kept her eye on the apple, she would not have eaten it, and we should not now be bothered with clothes."

At the same time (February 14) the Kaiser wrote to King Edward informing him of his action. The King's reply was laconic, eloquent, and unmistakable:

My dear William—I have received your letter of the 14th inst. in which you have informed me that you have written a letter to Lord Tweedmouth relative to the German naval programme in which you have detected some uneasiness in the British press.

Your writing to my First Lord of the Admiralty is a "new departure," and I do not see how he can prevent our press from calling attention to the great increase in building of German ships of war, which necessitates our increasing our navy also.

Believe me, your affectionate uncle,

Edward R.

Tweedmouth, however, took longer to reply, and at once communicated the Kaiser's letter, which he received on 18th February, to Sir Edward Grey and the King. An astounding point of Tweedmouth's reply, which Sir Edward Grey modified and shortened considerably, was that he included the British naval estimates, which had not yet been submitted to the House of Commons.[1]

Rumours of the Kaiser's letter and Lord Tweedmouth's reply spread abroad, and on 6th March Colonel Repington, the military correspondent of *The Times*, stated that such communications had been exchanged, and described the Kaiser's intervention as amounting to an insidious attempt to influence in German interests the minister responsible for our naval estimates and

[1] The Navy Estimates for 1908–9, providing for only two Dreadnoughts, although in March the German programme was enlarged, testified to the conciliatory spirit of the British cabinet. For text of Lord Tweedmouth's letter see *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv. p. 35.

demanded that the correspondence should be laid before Parliament. *The Times*, in a shrill leading article, strongly supported the demand. The same afternoon Mr. Asquith, Chancellor of the Exchequer, acknowledged in the House of Commons that such a correspondence had taken place, but added that "it was purely a private and personal communication conceived in an entirely friendly spirit. The answer was equally private and informal, and neither the letter nor the answer was communicated to the cabinet Before the letter arrived, the cabinet had come to a formal decision with regard to the Navy Estimates" A little further information was supplied on 9th March by Lord Tweedmouth. "The letter came by ordinary post. It was private and personal, very friendly in its tone and quite informal. I showed it to Sir Edward Grey, who agreed that it should be treated as a private and not an official one; and on 20th February I replied in a friendly and informal manner." Lord Rosebery concluded the brief debate with a few sentences which were warmly appreciated in Berlin:

My only apprehension is that we may be making ourselves quite ridiculous by the fuss which has been made. We have seen a whole world of absolutely insane inferences drawn. There is a section of the press in both countries which seeks to create bad blood. Those sections take up every trivial incident—this is a trivial incident—to excite morbid suspicions between the two nations which is gradually developing into a danger to European peace. There is no earthly reason that I know why our friendship with France should necessarily entail a hostile attitude to Germany.

The King was almost of Rosebery's opinion and commented (March 8, 1908): "A most discreditable state of affairs. . . . What an insult to Fisher, who behaved splendidly." Prince von Bulow dealt with his own critics in a similar manner, claiming that every sovereign had a right to address other statesmen. "It is a gross libel to suggest that it is an attempt to influence the minister in the interests of Germany, or secret interference in the domestic affairs of Great Britain." As appears from the subsequent correspondence, the German Chancellor's first knowledge of the letter was derived from *The Times* of 6th March Prince von Bulow at once wrote to the Kaiser asking for a copy of the letter so that he might be "armed

for all eventualities." Later on the same day he forwarded to the monarch a telegram from Count Metternich urging that

your letter to Lord Tweedmouth should be published to repair damage caused by *The Times*. Unless published, false insinuations may be believed. Possibly Lord Tweedmouth may fall over this affair, and the Liberals who are favourably disposed to us may suffer a heavy blow. All the elements friendly to us will be weakened, and the Jingoes strengthened. Moreover, the popularity of his Majesty the Kaiser will suffer in England, and the distrust against our policy again increase.

In the margin opposite to this the Kaiser wrote :

I don't share Metternich's fears. The English have not yet become so absolutely crazy. *The Times* attack comes from the King, who is anxious lest the letter should produce too tranquillising an impression. . . .[1]

Count Metternich had advised publication of the letter, and Prince von Bülow had approved it in principle, but cognisance of its contents changed their views of the expediency of such a step. Another echo of King Edward's feeling about the letter is contained in a report from Count Metternich to Prince Bülow, dated 8th March, which begins :

Sir Ernest Cassel returned from Egypt yesterday, and while passing through Paris had an exhaustive conversation with King Edward. Sir Ernest called on me to-day. He told me King Edward was very annoyed over the affair of the correspondence with Lord Tweedmouth. Through the Imperial visit to Windsor everything had been brought into right channels, and now this business had come. He condemned sharply Lord Esher's indiscreet letter to the Navy League in which it was stated that from the Kaiser down to the last man every one in Germany would be delighted at the fall of Sir John Fisher.[2]

Cassel had given the lie direct to the Kaiser's assertion that "*The Times*' move comes from the King." The Kaiser wrote in the margin of the Ambassador's report the following fierce comment :

Only now ! After five weeks ! He never did the slightest thing four or five weeks ago, when the attack of his friend and official on me took place, to make known his displeasure and regret ! Why did not the King give him a good blowing up then !

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv. p. 39. [2] *Ibid.* vol. xxiv. p. 44.

In the course of his letter Count Metternich gave a very fair and reasoned exposition of the attitude of nearly every Englishman towards the German naval policy. To the foot of the letter the Kaiser appended a note, in which he said:

For all this it is not our fleet that is responsible, but the absolute crazy "Dreadnought" policy of Sir John Fisher and his Majesty, who believed that they would thereby place us *en demeure* Now they and the deluded Britons see that they have been totally mistaken, and that thereby they have destroyed their old great past superiority, as all the states imitate them. That has made Britons nervous, as they have only just realised it. They will just have to get used to our fleet. And from time to time we must assure them that it is not against them.[1]

In view of public excitement the cabinet would have been wise to ask the Kaiser's permission to publish the correspondence. As it was, British anger at what was deemed to be an unwarranted interference with what was purely a British concern was not easily allayed. Sir John Fisher in a letter to the King dated 20th February pointedly remarked that "it looks to me as if the German Emperor was trying on the 'Delcassé' game again." Even Grey felt impelled to ask Metternich what the Kaiser would have said if the King had written to Admiral Tirpitz about the German naval programme. Metternich looked grim and said nothing.[2]

Hardinge summed up the situation on 14th March in a letter to the King, in which he pointed out that, thanks to the influence of the Conservative leaders, the incidents had fortunately been brought to a close without the fact coming out that the naval estimates had been communicated to the Kaiser before they were submitted to the House of Commons. "I think," he added, "we may be fairly certain that the Emperor will not again write privately to one of your Majesty's ministers. . . . The Emperor's indiscretion proved the ruin of President Kruger and of Count Goluchowski, so Lord Tweedmouth has been somewhat fortunate in his escape."

But Tweedmouth was not to escape so easily the consequences of the Kaiser's touch. Although he had had no responsibility for

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv. p. 46.
[2] Hardinge to Knollys, 24th February 1908.

the Kaiser's action, there was a lack of wisdom in his treatment of the curious situation. He had not been discreet concerning the contents either of the Kaiser's letter to him or of his own reply, and there was a feeling that a change in his office was desirable.

Mr. Asquith, on becoming Premier, at once superseded Lord Tweedmouth by Mr. McKenna, and on 5th May 1908 Lord Fisher, the First Sea Lord, could write to Lord Esher: "Yesterday, with all Sea Lords present, Mr. McKenna formally agreed to four Dreadnoughts, and if necessary six Dreadnoughts next year (perhaps the greatest triumph ever known). . . . He tells me Harcourt for certain will resign." It was more nearly Mr. McKenna, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who resigned. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill held that four capital ships were ample, and the new First Lord was only saved by the intervention of Sir Edward Grey, who was quite prepared to leave the Foreign Office if full measure of national security were not decreed.[1]

Soon afterwards Tweedmouth was struck down by a cerebral disorder, and in the middle of May the new Prime Minister informed the King that he had received from Tweedmouth unintelligible letters which proved that his mind was unhinged. The King wrote on the communication the words, "This is very sad but explains his extraordinary behaviour on so many occasions." On 26th September 1908 Tweedmouth resigned the Presidency of the Council, and a year later died.

IV

The Tweedmouth letter and its sequelae by no means tended to improve the King's relations with the Kaiser, whose public and private pronouncements were a mingled yarn of peaceful and war-like assurances. There was ambiguity about his words

[1] The promotion of Mr. Asquith to the Premiership in 1908 brought Mr. Lloyd George to the Exchequer and Mr. Churchill into the cabinet; and for the next three years these two ministers led a crusade for social reform and a reduction of armaments. Mr. Lewis Harcourt (afterwards Viscount Harcourt), outside the combination, helped it by his declaration that not for fifteen years had Anglo-German relations been on so satisfactory a footing. These three had taken quite sincerely the Kaiser's assurances to Lord Tweedmouth that the German Naval Law was not aimed at England.

on Anglo-German relations, which alternated between arrogant assertions of the invincibility of his army, an almost childish self-congratulation on the developing power of his navy, and tenderly-phrased professions of his love of peace. A passage in a letter from Prince von Bulow to the Kaiser on 19th July 1908 shows that the former fully realised the dangers of a public outburst of this feeling of irritation, and with what devious diplomacy he sought to avert them. The Chancellor wrote :

Ballin has informed me fully of the relationship between your Majesty and His Majesty King Edward. Obviously the King is trying to provoke your Majesty by all sorts of pinpricks. Nothing amuses the King more, Ballin thinks, than when bad temper is shown here At the same time the King would like it to appear to the world as if he had been slighted by you. These tactics the exalted gentleman carries out with deliberation and shrewdness. It must be our tactics not to expose ourselves and not to give the King the possibility of having reason, either in substance or form, to complain of us.

Throughout the correspondence (since published in *Die grosse Politik*) it is evident that while German ministers and the German Ambassador in London were not blind to the desirability of an arrangement with the British Government for a limitation of naval armaments, their timid tentatives in this direction invariably called forth a furious negative from the Kaiser. Thus he comments as follows on a report of Count Metternich, dated 16th July 1908 :

It must be indicated to him that good relationship to England is not wanted by me at the price of the building of Germany's fleet. If England intends to offer us her hand in condescension with a hint that we must reduce our fleet, that is a bottomless impertinence which involves a grave insult to the German nation and its Kaiser which must be repelled by the Ambassador *a limine*. With the same right France and Russia could then demand a limitation of our land armaments. As soon as one allows a foreign state, under whatever pretext, to interfere with one's armaments, one abdicates like Portugal and Spain. The German fleet is not built against any one, and, therefore, not against England, but according to our own necessity. That is said quite clearly in the Naval Law, and has remained unchallenged for eleven years. This law will be carried out to the last tittle ;

whether the Britons like it or not does not matter. If they want war let them begin it; we are not afraid.[1]

It is evident that the Anglo-German naval rivalry which preceded the Great War owed not a little of its virulence and its Juggernaut-like inevitability to the bellicose and uncompromising attitude of the Kaiser.

V

The prospective retirement of Sir Frank Lascelles from the post of British Ambassador to Berlin now raised a difficult question. Sir Frank Lascelles had of late years been on terms of great intimacy with the Kaiser, and he had naturally been influenced by the friendly attentions which the Kaiser had paid him. Sir Frank's dominant desire was to do whatever was possible in the interests of peace, and he was often in situations of grave embarrassment. From early years he had been a personal friend of King Edward, who constantly wrote to him without restraint. During periods of tension between uncle and nephew, Lascelles was often asked by King Edward to protest in a personal interview with the Kaiser against some slight which the Kaiser in reported conversation had laid upon his uncle. Lascelles was naturally inclined to shirk these delicate missions, and towards the end of his tenure of office King Edward and his friends thought that Lascelles had fallen so completely under the Kaiser's sway as to fail in those unpleasant duties with which he was from time to time entrusted. In the King's entourage Lascelles was regarded as pro-German, and not sufficiently assertive of England's position and interests. But while the conclusion had been reached that Lascelles must go, it was not easy to discover a successor who should combine conciliatory manners with firmness in defining King Edward's and his ministers' point of view. Sir Edward Grey's choice at first fell on Mr. (later Sir) Fairfax Cartwright, Minister in Madrid, and the King in supporting his minister's selection wrote to the Kaiser (June 16, 1908):

My dear William—I am anxious to bring the name of Mr. Cartwright, who is now Minister at Madrid and Stuttgart, before you for the post of my Ambassador at Berlin.

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv. pp. 99-104.

Both his Grandmother and Mother were Germans and he has a great knowledge of and predilection for Germany. His Father was a great friend of the late Lord Ampthill's, and Mr. Cartwright began his diplomatic career as an Attaché to the British Embassy at Berlin where Lord Ampthill was Ambassador, and I understand you know him and even called him by his Christian name.

As it is now settled that Sir Frank Lascelles retires this autumn from the important post he holds at Berlin, it has been my anxious wish, and that of my government, to find some one to replace him as adequately as possible, and above all a *persona grata* to yourself. Let me express a hope that the proposed appointment will find favour in your eyes.

I trust Dona is well again now and has recovered from what might have been a serious accident, and with Aunt's love, believe me, etc EDWARD R.

The Kaiser replied (June 25) regretting Sir Frank Lascelles' departure—"I found in him a loyal friend and a staunch advocate of a good understanding between our two countries." With regard to the selection of Mr. Fairfax Cartwright as Lascelles' successor he wrote .

I remember having met Mr. Cartwright in my boyhood and later, but I have long ago quite lost sight of him. I am interested to hear from you that he has a predilection for my country, and hope that you judge him rightly, for I hear that there are people who have doubts about his having sympathies for Germany. If I may express an opinion relating to the representation of Great Britain in Berlin, I think it would be very gratefully felt at home if somebody were chosen who plays a prominent part in your country. For instance a person of the calibre of Curzon, Cromer, Rosebery, or Bryce. It would be very easy for such a person soon to gain an influential position in Berlin. Of course I shall welcome the ambassador of your choice, and if you have settled to appoint Mr. Cartwright, I shall accept him. May he prove equal to the task before him and promote goodwill and friendship between our two countries which we both have at heart.

After the Kaiser had written his letter of the 25th June, it was discovered that Mr. Cartwright had written, twenty years earlier, a book (of which only four copies were ever published) which contained satirical reflections upon Berlin society, and now, through the usual diplomatic channels, it was pointed out that Mr. Cartwright's indiscretion might prejudice his position in Berlin. Sir E. Grey, in pointing out this obstacle to the King

on 27th June, felt that it would be impossible to proceed with the appointment, and asked the King's permission to take a little time to consider the matter and to discuss it with the Prime Minister before making another suggestion.

It was obvious to all concerned that the Kaiser's nominees, Curzon, Rosebery, or Bryce, were quite out of the question, and it was doubtful if Cromer, who was a "possible," would be willing to go. A week later, on 2nd July 1908, Sir E. Grey wrote to Lord Knollys asking him not to mention a word to anybody about Cartwright's non-appointment to Berlin, which caused the King to comment: "I have never breathed a word to a soul, but the Foreign Office is full of leakages. If Mr. Cartwright is not chosen, whom do Foreign Office propose?"

The King thought the best way out of the impasse would be to have an interview with the Kaiser, to whom he wrote in his own hand on 13th July 1908:

Since receiving your letter of 25th ult. in which you do not express your unwillingness to receive Mr. Cartwright as Sir F. Lascelles' successor, there may be reasons in which another choice might be preferable, though in many ways I have reason to believe Mr. Cartwright would have proved an efficient ambassador, and he has a charming wife, Princess Chigi, who is of an excellent Roman family.

I propose making my annual cure at Marienbad next month, and *en route* have arranged to pay my visit to Emperor of Austria at Ischl on 12th August to congratulate him on his 60th anniversary. I should be very glad if it suited you to give me a rendezvous on 11th at Friedrichshof. I could arrive in the morning and stay till after dinner. Should this proposal suit you, would you kindly send me a telegram so as to enable me to make the necessary arrangements?

The Kaiser welcomed the interview, and in the interval every endeavour was made to find some one who would prove a suitable successor to Sir Frank Lascelles.

VI

Sir Edward Grey was sanguine that the proposed meeting at Cronberg between King Edward and the Kaiser might be so conducted as to promote an arrangement for a mutual reduction of expenditure on armaments—a step which was essential, in

the Foreign Secretary's view, to the maintenance of peace Sir Edward believed that King Edward might press an arrangement on the Kaiser when they met, and he prepared a memorandum which he invited King Edward to communicate to the Kaiser. The King did not welcome the plan, which he deemed to go beyond his personal functions. He was averse from raising so crucial an issue in private conversation with his nephew. However, he put no obstacle in Sir Edward's way. The memorandum, which was dated 23rd July 1908, pointed out that if the Germans continued to execute their naval programme at a rapid speed, the British Government would "certainly have to ask Parliament to vote a considerable increase of expenditure."

> The justification and necessity for this increase, which would have to be openly avowed, would be the German expenditure. We have to take into account not only the German navy but also . . . the German army. . .
>
> There is no corresponding risk of this kind to Germany; for however superior our fleet was, no naval victory would bring us any nearer to Berlin.
>
> It is certain if we have to propose a greater naval expenditure next year the effect on the press here and on public feeling in both England and Germany will be adverse to good relations . . .
>
> If it could be shown that, as a result of the interview between the two sovereigns, a slackening of activity in the building programmes of the two navies had ensued, there is no doubt that the state of unrest prevailing in Europe due to apprehensions in England and Germany would be greatly appeased, and this would be of more value to the peace of the world than any entente based on the settlement of territorial or commercial questions. Were such a happy result to be attained, the King and the Emperor would be rightly hailed together as the Peacemakers of Europe.

The King, despite the lukewarmness with which he received Grey's views, now determined to do his utmost to persuade the Kaiser to accept them. Accordingly, on 6th August, five days before the Cronberg meeting was to take place, Sir E. Grey forwarded to the King another memorandum—

> in form just such a memorandum as might naturally be written for the King by his Minister on the relations with the country which he is going to visit; but it is more full in the particular points of naval expenditure than the first memorandum.

The King will decide which he thinks most suitable for the Emperor to see.

He added the postscript :

The Emperor will no doubt say that the German Navy Programme is fixed by law and cannot be altered, but everything depends upon the *pace* at which that programme is carried out. If it can't be altered it might be slowed down.

The second memorandum followed the lines of the first. There was nothing in the relations between the two governments or peoples to cause anxiety.

"The real difficulty," Grey pointed out, "is not in the present relations of the two countries, but in a certain anxiety as to their probable relations with each other a few years hence. A section of opinion in each country speaks and writes as if Germany and England were bound to entertain, increasingly as years go on, unfriendly designs upon each other. In neither country does this opinion appear to be encouraged, on the contrary it is deprecated by the authorities; but it persists, and has come now to found itself upon the rivalry in naval expenditure, the growth of which is now taken by public opinion as the test of what the prospective relations of the two countries are likely to be. Should naval expenditure increase, apprehension will be intensified; if the expenditure were slackened apprehension would at once diminish.

"The British government would not think of questioning the right of Germany to build as large a navy as she thinks necessary for her own purposes, nor would they complain of it. But they have to face the fact that at the present rate of construction the German naval programme will, in a very few years, place the German navy in a position of superiority to the British as regards the most powerful type of battleship.

"This will necessitate a new British programme of construction to be begun next year. It will be demanded by public opinion; it must avowedly be accounted for solely by reference to the German programme; for the other nations of Europe are either not adding appreciably to their navies or have no navies of importance; and nations outside Europe are too distant or have not armies sufficient to threaten the independence of Great Britain.

"Whereas, if the German navy became superior or even attained such a relative proportion to the British as to enable it at an untoward moment to secure command of the sea for a few days, Great Britain would be not only defeated but occupied and conquered; Germany does not run so great a risk as this from

any superiority of the British fleet, for the British army is so inferior to the German in size that occupation and conquest are out of the question. Without, therefore, attributing any sinister motive to the building of the German fleet it is a paramount necessity to increase British naval expenditure to meet the German programme, though we fear that this may be taken as a sign of increasing rivalry and distrust, and though we regret anything which is likely to be a barrier to better feeling.

"On the other hand a slackening of naval expenditure on both sides would at once be followed by a great rebound in public opinion towards friendly feeling and security. . . . It would be welcomed not in Germany and England alone but everywhere as evidence of pacific intentions, of good understanding and confidence between the two countries. Rightly or wrongly a great part of the world has come of late years to concentrate attention upon the relations between England and Germany, to look in them for the chief indication of whether the peace of the world is likely to be disturbed, and to estimate this by their rivalry in naval expenditure. If this rivalry diminished, still more if the two countries came to any agreement about it, there would be increased confidence throughout the world, a general sense of security such as no other event could produce, and the Emperor and King would stand together before the world as the great peacemakers.

"It is not desired to force any discussion of this question even in private, if this is deprecated by the Emperor, but the subject is too important not to be mentioned, when the prospect of a visit of the King to Berlin next year is likely to be discussed."

Both Grey and the King, however, realised that the Kaiser was "so sensitive at anything which may be construed as an attempt to influence German expenditure," that neither felt sure how he would take any memorandum. Grey made his suggestions "with great hesitation and deference," for he felt that it was "a personal matter between the King and the Emperor, in which the King's own knowledge and judgement of the Emperor's disposition is much superior to that of any of us "[1]

VII

Finally, on 11th August 1908, the King, accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, Sir Stanley Clarke, and Major Frederick

[1] Grey to Knollys, 8th August 1908. This contrasts strangely with some of the statements in Grey's *Twenty-five Years*.

Ponsonby, met the Kaiser at Cronberg. During the course of the morning the King had a long and cordial interview with the Emperor, in which subjects of interest to England and Germany were discussed between them with the exception of naval armaments, and mutual friendly assurances were given on both sides. The King told Hardinge later that, although he touched on the question of naval expenditure, and mentioned that Grey had given him a paper containing the view of the British government on the subject, the Emperor neither asked to see the paper nor to know its contents, and the King, therefore, considered that it would be more tactful on his part not to force upon the Emperor a discussion which he seemed anxious to avoid. The King had discussed with Hardinge on the outward journey what was to be done with Grey's memorandum, but nothing definite was settled. After the very clear statements made to Hardinge later in the day by the Emperor and Herr von Jenisch, there can be no doubt that the King exercised a wise discretion in not broaching a subject of which the discussion was evidently unpalatable, and which might possibly have spoilt the happy effect of the conversation which had taken place between them.[1]

The personal aspects of the visit were pleasant enough. "Uncle Bertie was all sunshine at Cronberg and in very good humour," reported the Kaiser to the Tsar on 18th August. "He intends visiting Berlin officially with Aunt Alix next year."

The King's reticence on the subject of the naval memorandum was judicious, for later when Hardinge talked to the Kaiser about it the Kaiser became extremely angry. His suite, veering with each gust of Imperial temper, saw his anger and "cut" Hardinge. But the Kaiser's anger passed and he endeavoured to make amends by giving Hardinge the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle, which Hardinge was unwilling to accept, although he deemed it prudent to advise the King to allow him to accept the honour.

Actually only one point was discussed with success—the question of a successor to Sir Frank Lascelles, the British Ambassador to Berlin. Sir E. Grey had made every effort to find a suitable candidate, but he was determined that no name should be put forward "outside the Service unless very distinguished" and

[1] Hardinge's report to Foreign Office, 11th August 1908. Published in *The Times*, 10th November 1924.

the suggested appointment of Lord Selborne fell to the ground. The Foreign Office proposed Sir Ralph Paget, who, however, was destined for Munich, while Cartwright went to Vienna to replace Sir Edward Goschen, who was now (July 24) suggested for Berlin. The Kaiser first heard of Goschen without enthusiasm, "muttering something about the Ghetto," and it seemed as if the Cronberg meeting might not provide a solution to the difficulty. But when the King suggested the name of Sir Edward Goschen to the Kaiser, the Emperor welcomed the choice and stated that he had "always entertained a feeling of great respect for Lord Goschen, the Ambassador's late brother, and that he was just the person whom he himself would have selected." The Kaiser was anxious that the British Ambassador in Berlin "should occupy the most prominent and unassailable position in society, and that as he knew Berlin society to be malicious he was glad that Sir F. Cartwright's name had been withdrawn, though he had nothing to say against this distinguished diplomatist, whom he had known well and liked in the past, but had not met for several years." [1] But although the Kaiser was keen on Goschen, Sir Edward Goschen himself was by no means so keen, and would cheerfully have declined the promotion had it not been the King's express wish that he should accept it. He felt that his mission to Berlin would end in a catastrophe. "The German Emperor," he said, "will not listen to our proposals for a naval arrangement, and he pretends that we, not the Germans, are forcing the pace. Germany is the innocent lamb whom we are accusing of troubling our waters. If he goes on in that way, a conflict between us and Germany is only a matter of time."

But Goschen, in spite of his lukewarmness, was appointed to Berlin on 13th August. The previous morning he had met King Edward at Linz, the capital of Upper Austria, while the King was on his way from Cronberg to pay a visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl to congratulate him on his Diamond Jubilee, and it was during the journey that King Edward broke the news to his Ambassador of his promotion [2]

The changes, however, did not take place until the following November—a month after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The King thought it was then a mistake to move

[1] Hardinge's memorandum to Foreign Office, 16th August 1908.
[2] Wickham Steed's letter to *The Times*, 21st May 1925.

Lascelles while the crisis was on, but as Lascelles had already returned to England, he urged that Goschen should be sent out at once. Thus Goschen's embassy at Berlin commenced with the threat of a European war, and ended, six years later, with that threat realised.

After the King had left Cronberg, the Kaiser had a conversation with Sir Frank Lascelles in which he expressed his annoyance that Hardinge should have raised the question of naval armaments, calling him a Germanophobe, etc. His annoyance or resentment seemed hardly compatible with his own initiative in bestowing upon Hardinge the "Red Eagle" or with the appreciative words with which he spoke to the King of Hardinge. But they were foursquare with the Kaiser's impetuous and unreliable character.

VIII

While the relations of the two countries were being eagerly discussed by ministers and the press, the publication of two interviews with the Kaiser let loose a hurricane.

The first was an undated and anonymous interview which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on 28th October 1908.[1]

"Moments sometimes occur in the history of nations," wrote their correspondent, "when a calculated indiscretion proves of the highest public service, and it is for that reason that I have decided to make known the substance of a recent conversation which it was my privilege to have with His Majesty the German Emperor. I do so in the hope that it may help to remove the obstinate misconception of the character of the Kaiser's feelings towards England. . . ."

The Kaiser, he wrote, spoke with impulsive and unusual frankness. "You English," he said, "are mad, mad as March hares" (a phrase that was not likely to remove English "misconceptions" of him), and the Kaiser complained bitterly of the way his actions had been misjudged in England. His dominant

[1] For full text see Dr. J. Hill's *Impressions of the Kaiser*, pp. 261-2. The most authoritative accounts of the incident are given by Spickerhagel, *Fürst Bülow*, ch. 5, Schoen's *Memoirs*, pp. 102-8, and *Die grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv. p. 165 *seq.*

theme was his friendship for Great Britain, as evinced both openly and secretly during the Boer War, and steadily maintained, though neither shared by his own people nor recognised by the object of his affections. He declared that although Germany was committed to an expansion of her navy, the sole aim of the German fleet was the innocent protection of the steadily increasing German trade and the maintenance of German interests in the Far East He posed throughout his reported words as one who suffered in this country infinite pain and injury from being misunderstood.

The conversation, which was quite genuine, had taken place with Colonel (afterwards Major-General) Stuart Wortley, the Kaiser's host at Highcliffe in December of the previous year. It had sprung from the elated mood which the Kaiser's visit to Windsor had evoked, and no doubt expressed the momentary wish for better relations which his genial reception by his relative and the English people had moved in him.

The publication of the account of the interview, like the letter to Lord Tweedmouth, however well-intentioned, increased the *malaise* which it was intended to dispel. Alike in England and Germany the publication created widespread astonishment. In England it was generally viewed as a ruse to allay English suspicion of German aggression. In Germany it was almost regarded by the chauvinist party as an act of treason, and led to an agitation which threatened the Kaiser's prestige. The Kaiser was vehemently attacked in the German press and in the Reichstag as allowing his personal predilections and family sympathies to over-ride the Nationalist ambitions of his own country. Prince von Bülow regarded the Kaiser's action in permitting the publication as prejudicing his own responsibilities, and tendered his resignation, which he withdrew with reluctance. He plainly told the Kaiser that it was outside his prerogative to make pronouncements on foreign policy without his previous assent. In the Reichstag there was a demand for constitutional limitations on the Kaiser's personal powers, and the Chancellor satisfied neither his master nor members of the Parliament when he gave an assurance that the Kaiser would prove more cautious in the future.

The outcry in Germany caused the Kaiser much perturbation, and in accordance with his oscillating temper he deemed it

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necessary to retrace his impetuous steps and identify himself anew with his fellow-countrymen's hostility to England.

A month later the Kaiser, who was always accessible to American visitors and was frank in conversation with them, gave an indiscreet interview to William Bayard Hale, who promptly sent notes of his interview to the *New York World.* In the course of this conversation the Kaiser "said things unfriendly to England and to the King" and a synopsis of these contemptuous remarks appeared in the *New York World.* At once there was an outcry. The German government deemed Hale's statements so prejudicial to good relations that the German Ambassador in Washington was directed to procure their suppression, while the German Foreign Office denounced it as a "baseless invention." The German Foreign Office, however, was too late to secure the suppression of the synopsis in the *New York World,* though the British Foreign Office persuaded the *Daily Mail* not to publish it, on the somewhat Jesuitical grounds that they would hold a trump card by being able to say later that they had the article, and, for the sake of good relations, did not publish it! [1] Hale's full report, prepared for the *Century* magazine, was accordingly withdrawn. Lascelles, writing to Knollys, admitted the Kaiser's irresponsible habit of abusing the English government to strangers, but questioned whether, on this occasion, he had directly denounced the King. King Edward, however, did not doubt the authenticity of Hale's report and wrote in his own hand to Lord Knollys from Castle Rising on 25th November:

My dear Francis—Thank you for sending me Metternich's letter with G.E.'s emphatic denial. I presume nothing more to say than to accept. I am, however, convinced in my mind that the words attributed to the German Emperor by Mr. Hale are perfectly correct. I know the German Emperor hates me and never loses an opportunity of saying so (behind my back), whilst I have always been kind and nice to him. As regards my visit to Berlin there is no hurry to settle anything at present. The Foreign Office to gain their own object will not care a pin what humiliation I have to put up with. This American incident is by no means over. I don't think our American cousins will be pleased or satisfied by the Imperial denial. . . .

[1] Hardinge to Knollys, 20th November 1908.

Five days later the *New York World* published a copy of a cable despatched to Prince von Bulow, in which it acknowledged that,

> after a painstaking investigation, the *World* finds no convincing basis for its published synopsis of the Hale interview with his Majesty the German Emperor. It accepts your verdict that the alleged interview ascribed to the Emperor stupidly absurd words which he cannot have uttered

Whatever the original intention which possessed the Kaiser when he gave the two interviews, there is little doubt but that they served to accentuate Anglo-German ill-feeling.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ANNEXATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

I

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Scarcely had the King returned from meeting the Tsar at Reval in June 1908 when threatening clouds suddenly developed in the European sky, and the sanguine hopes of calm were rudely dissipated. Once again it seemed as if a disturbance in the Balkans was to be the prelude to a European storm, this time a conflict between the tempestuous nationalism of Serbia and the aggressive policy of Austria.

As an unexpected result of the Reval meeting between King Edward and the Tsar, a revolution in Turkey had been precipitated. Turkey in Europe had hitherto survived chiefly because of the rivalries between Britain and Russia, and agreement between these two Powers now seemed to threaten Ottoman rule over the Balkan Christians, unless the Turks themselves could create in time a wholly new situation. The Young Turk movement, commonly regarded as the pathetic delusion of westernised cliques preaching futile constitutionalism from Paris or Geneva, had long been tending to the overthrow of the old order prolonged by the cunning tyranny of Abdul Hamid, and, aided by Jewish ability, had spread an insidious propaganda that resisted all efforts to root it out. Finally, the Young Turks established their secret directorate at Salonika, where the conspiratorial Committee of Union and Progress was formed to prepare for the revolution. Fear of the "Reval programme" of reforms hastened the preparations, and on 3rd July 1908 the standard of Turkish revolt against the Sultan was raised in Macedonia, where the rising met with astounding success. Abdul

Hamid could no longer rely on the army, and in three weeks, after a despotism of thirty years, the oriental master of wiles was at last netted. On 24th July he restored by a formal decree the Constitution of 1876, suspended since 1878, and summoned a Chamber of Deputies.

The success of the revolution was hailed with delight throughout the Ottoman dominions, and for a few weeks idyllic enthusiasm prevailed in Turkey and elsewhere. Not only did Turks and Christians fraternise, but, still more astonishing, the various Christian sects embraced each other Dreams of progressive liberalism filled the air In Britain, for instance, Sir Edward Grey declared that, as a result of this marvellous fraternisation of races and religions, "the Macedonian question and others of a similar character will entirely disappear." Unfortunately, in the main respect—the determination to assert and to increase Ottoman and Moslem ascendency—the Young Turks were but the Old Turks "writ large." They showed every desire to emphasise Ottoman suzerainty in quarters where under Abdul Hamid it had been long dormant and was assumed to be extinct. The recoil of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, acting in collusion, led to that sinister and convulsive Balkan crisis which was the real introduction to the Great War.

II

The universal joy at the emancipation of Turkey from the thraldom of Abdul Hamid's autocracy was still pulsating through Europe when King Edward, on 11th August 1908, left Cronberg, where he had met the Kaiser, to proceed to Ischl to visit the veteran head of the Dual Monarchy. The ostensible reason for the meeting was to congratulate Francis Joseph on his Diamond Jubilee as a monarch. It was not an "official" visit, but as the King was accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge and Sir Edward Goschen, there were grounds for believing that it was destined to have greater results than a courteous interchange of compliments. Whilst at Cronberg both the King and Sir Charles Hardinge had tried to find an opening to persuade the Kaiser to assent to some mitigation of Anglo-German naval rivalry, but these efforts had proved unavailing.

The Austrian Emperor and King Edward took a drive together

one afternoon, and the King afterwards congratulated himself on the freedom with which the old Emperor talked of political matters. But the Emperor was deaf to the King's appeal that he should use his good offices to persuade the Kaiser of the danger of unrestricted naval rivalry between Germany and England. As a matter of fact, the Kaiser had forestalled the King by informing the Emperor of the Cronberg conversations, and had persuaded him that King Edward's real object was to isolate Germany. The King was sorely disappointed. He had no other purpose than to diminish the tension which was beginning to threaten peace, and Sir Edward Grey could truthfully aver that Britain had carefully avoided anything likely to make mischief between Germany and Austria.

Sir Charles Hardinge and Baron von Aehrenthal,[1] too, had a long conversation, and a vague report was published stating that they had discussed the situation created by the recent revolution in Turkey.

"Everything," as Hardinge wrote to Knollys on 17th August, "went off capitally. The old Emperor is the dearest and most courteous old gentleman that lives, and I had quite a satisfactory conversation with Aehrenthal. In spite of two nights spent in the train and two fatiguing days at Cronberg and Ischl, I am glad to say that the King was none the worse for them and was extremely well and in the best possible spirits."

These interviews, which were marked by every outward sign of cordiality and mutual confidence, were striking examples of the discrepancy between the surface of the intercourse and what lay concealed below. The King, when he took leave of the Emperor Francis Joseph for what proved to be the last time, was under the impression that the relations of the Emperor and his government with the rest of Europe were not likely

[1] Two years earlier, in October 1906, the Emperor of Austria had superseded Count Goluchowski by Baron von Aehrenthal as his "Minister of the Imperial and Royal Household and for Foreign Affairs." Aehrenthal was of a different race and school from his loquacious and easy-going predecessor, who, however, was a man of his word, and could be trusted. By birth a German Bohemian, with at least a strain of Jewish blood in his veins, Aehrenthal had characteristics of his own: industriously dour, refractory to outside influences, and pertinacious to the point of obstinacy, he was not without character of an unpleasant Machiavellian sort, though lacking in mental elasticity. The greater part of his diplomatic life had been spent at St. Petersburg, where he had imbibed a cordial distrust of Liberalism.

to be disturbed, and he parted from the Emperor with every sign of goodwill and honest appreciation. Sir Charles Hardinge accepted without misgiving Aehrenthal's assurances of friendly confidence. Yet at the moment the Austrian minister was contemplating a course of action in the Balkans which was to threaten and ultimately to destroy European peace Aehrenthal viewed with dislike the Young Turk rebellion and decided that the time had now come for Austria to exercise a long-claimed right to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, which she had occupied and administered with excellent material results under the faint shadow of the Sultan's suzerainty since 1878 Aehrenthal, however, had yet to win over the Emperor Francis Joseph to his views. At the same time Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who was nominally the Sultan's vassal, had come to the decision to shake off the Turkish yoke and to proclaim himself Tsar of Bulgaria. There was sufficient in either of these two decisions to plunge all Europe into war.

Two days after leaving Ischl the King, then at Marienbad, was warned by Mr. Wickham Steed, *The Times*' correspondent at Vienna, that Austria was contemplating the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "I cannot believe that," the King replied. "It would upset the whole of Europe. What proof have you? The Emperor Francis Joseph gave me no hint of anything of the sort. No, I cannot believe that." Although Steed was on the right track he had no proof of his suspicions, and could only assure the King that annexation was in the air. "I still think you are wrong," the King replied. "Surely the Emperor would have said something to me"[1]

The King, chary of accepting a hearsay report which seemed to have little foundation in fact, could not credit Steed's assertion that so drastic a step was contemplated. He had the firmest faith in the old Emperor and knew that he was keenly desirous of maintaining European peace. He realised that the annexation of two Turkish provinces might involve war, and he did not think that Austria would take such a risk. But Steed was right—three days later, on 18th August, the Emperor's seventy-eighth birthday, the secret decision to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina was taken at Vienna.

[1] Wickham Steed's *Through Thirty Years.*

III

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Meanwhile, M. Clemenceau, the French Prime Minister, had arrived at Carlsbad, and, in an interview with Mr. Wickham Steed, vehemently censured the British public and government. The interview was reported to Sir E. Goschen, the British Ambassador in Vienna, who asked Steed to make some notes of it, as "Clemenceau and Isvolsky are coming to lunch here with the King on the 26th. If Clemenceau talks to the King as he has talked to you, the King ought to be primed beforehand. Let me have some notes so that I may warn the King."

On 26th August Clemenceau and Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister (who had also gone to Carlsbad for the "cure"), came motoring over to Marienbad together, to lunch with the King.[1] At the luncheon, at which conversation was general, the Marquis de Soveral and Sir E. Goschen were present, but afterwards the King had separate conversations with Clemenceau and Isvolsky on the balcony of the Hotel Weimar. With both, the King's relations were extremely cordial, and he suggested to Isvolsky that he should visit London later in the year—an invitation which Isvolsky warmly welcomed.

Clemenceau, in conversation with the King, practically repeated what he had said to Wickham Steed, with the result that the King sent Wickham Steed's notes on to the Foreign Office as an indication of the French Premier's conversation. According to these notes,[2] M. Clemenceau expressed strongly the opinion that some liberal concessions should be made by England in Egypt. He was already aware of the not entirely satisfactory outcome of the discussions at Cronberg on the subject of Anglo-German naval armaments, and spoke with considerable apprehension of the international outlook and appeared to think a conflict probable, a conflict that would be brought about

> *by some imprudence on the part of English public men* or some untimely movement of English public opinion. . . . Though there is much talk of invasion by Germany no one seriously believes it possible, and confidence in the power of the British fleet to destroy the German fleet in case of need has not been seriously impaired. But, for France, the danger of invasion is

[1] Isvolsky had previously seen the King on the 23rd.

[2] Printed in full in Wickham Steed's *Through Thirty Years*, pp. 287-8.

very real. We know that on the morrow of the outbreak of war between Germany and England, the German armies will invade France by way of Belgium, and that Germany will seek in France an indemnity for the losses likely to be suffered on sea at the hands of England. What can England do to help us? Destroy the German fleet? L'angleterre ferait ainsi un beau trou dans l'eau! In 1870 there was no German fleet, but the Prussians entered Paris all the same.

M. Clemenceau, after urging greater military preparations in England, added that he had noted with pleasure the endeavours in certain quarters in favour of a national army; but that army was still far from being made, and that, even if the men were forthcoming, there did not exist the weapons or the ammunition for them to use.

"These things," he continued, "cannot be improvised. I know you Englishmen do not want to be entangled in a Continental war, but I ask you, as I have asked C.-B., Haldane, and Grey, whether your policy is to-day what it was a century ago—to prevent the domination of Europe by any one Power? If it is, then you ought to look things in the face.

"If war comes and we are smashed for want of timely and efficient help from you, you will afterwards be obliged to incur obligations vastly greater than any now requisite—or you will have to bow your necks to the victor. I have preached this in season and out of season, and recently in the *Temps* during the visit of President Fallières to London.[1] But it is difficult to get Englishmen to look at things from our point of view, or to understand the exigencies of our situation. *Some of your public men are appallingly ignorant.* The fact is that England cannot maintain her position in Europe and in the world, nor can her friendship with France be secure against surprises unless she has an adequate army. Ce n'est pas à Trafalgar, qui était une bien brillante victoire navale, mais à Waterloo, qui était une bien petite bataille, que l'Angleterre à cassé le cou à Napoléon."

On the 29th, when coming from the croquet lawn near the Golf Club, the King beckoned to Steed and said, "If you had published your talk with Clemenceau in the paper, and if Clemenceau had learnt it by heart, he could not have said to me more exactly what was in your notes. So I have sent them

[1] Clemenceau had spoken much in the same strain to Sir E. Grey when he visited England on the occasion of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's funeral

on to Hardinge; but you'll get them back—you'll get them back. . . . But of course Clemenceau speaks a little from the French standpoint."

"Quite true, Sir," Steed replied, "what Clemenceau says aloud to us to-day is what most Frenchmen whisper to themselves—and what they will all shout if a European crisis comes and we are slow to understand its importance."

"Quite my opinion—quite my opinion," returned the King. "Clemenceau is a true friend of his own country and of ours. You will get your notes back." [1]

The next day (August 27) the King lunched with Isvolsky at Carlsbad, but there is no indication that either Isvolsky or the King broached the subject of Bosnia.

Isvolsky now commenced a round of diplomatic visits to Italy, France, and Great Britain to discuss the opening of the Straits. On 15th September 1908 he met Aehrenthal at Buchlau and the projected annexation was discussed. Isvolsky gave a conditional assent to the annexation provided that the opening of the Dardanelles to Russian warships was secured, which would have been a great concession to Russia; but although there was much discussion between the two, there was even more subsequent discussion as to what had been said. Aehrenthal declared that Isvolsky had agreed to the annexation in October and had adopted a thoroughly benevolent attitude, while Isvolsky, whose evidence has smaller corroboration, said that he merely promised no opposition, and that he understood that that annexation was to take place at a later date.[2] Both, however, maintained the

[1] On 30th September 1908 Sir E. Goschen returned to Steed his notes. They were unchanged except in one significant particular. Two passages, which are printed above in italics, had been underlined in red ink—apparently by the King. These notes bear striking witness to M. Clemenceau's foresight. See Wickham Steed's *Through Thirty Years*, p. 288.

[2] Isvolsky's own account of the interview runs:

"Au cours de mon entrevue avec le Baron d'Aehrenthal (15 Sept.) celui-ci me dit que certaines circonstances pourraient déterminer l'Autriche à annexer la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, sans pourtant me parler d'une décision définitive ni d'une date rapprochée. Il essaya de soutenir la thèse que l'annexion ne présentait qu'une question entre l'Autriche et la Turquie, et que l'Autriche avait sur les deux provinces un droit de conquête. Je lui déclarai nettement que la Russie ne pouvait pas accepter cette thèse, que nous considérerions l'annexion comme une question intéressant les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin et comme une atteinte portée à ce traité. J'ajoutai qu'en se décidant à l'annexion, l'Autriche risquait de mettre la poudre à l'Orient et créerait parmi les États Balcaniques et en Turquie une effervescence dangereuse pour la paix. Il s'empressa de me répondre que l'Autriche donnerait en même

greatest secrecy, and when the King left Marienbad in September it was with the impression that the only cloud on the European horizon was the prospect of an even more embittered Anglo-German naval rivalry.

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IV

A fortnight later, on 29th September, the Emperor of Austria deemed it advisable to inform the King and other European sovereigns of the projected coup. To the King he wrote :

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temps à la Turquie et aux Puissances Balcaniques une compensation de nature à les calmer celle du retrait de ses troupes du Sanjak de Novi Bazar et d'une renonciation formelle aux droits qui lui étaient conférés sur cette province par le Traité de Berlin Je lui dis que ceci rendrait évidemment plus facile une issue pacifique mais que cette compensation ne me paraissait suffisante ni pour la Russie ni pour les États Balcaniques Nous ne vous ferons pas la guerre, lui dis-je, mais je vous préviens que si vous abolissez une clause du Traité de Berlin, onéreuse pour vous, vous devez vous attendre à ce que la Russie et les États Balcaniques demandent l'abolition d'autres clauses, onéreuses pour elles. Bref vous provoquerez une révision du Traité de Berlin Pour ce qui est de la Russie elle n'a aucun appétit territorial en Turquie et elle ne demande que la conservation du statu quo actuel et de l'intégrité de l'Empire Ottoman. Mais en cas de révision, nous demanderons la modification dans un sens favorable à la Russie et aux autres Puissances riveraines de la Mer Noire des stipulations concernant les détroits Les États Balcaniques voudront aussi être compensés ; la Bulgarie demandera l'indépendance, la Serbie une rectification de frontière du côté de la Bosnie ; le Monténégro, l'abolition des restrictions qui lui sont imposées par l'Art 29 et je vous préviens que nous les soutiendrons Tout ceci je l'exprimai comme une opinion personnelle que je m'empresserai de soumettre à l'Empereur Depuis lors nous n'avons fait aucune communication au Cabinet de Vienne, et l'assertion du Comte Khevenhueller que l'Autriche-Hongrie agit avec le consentement de la Russie est pour le moins exagérée. Lorsqu'il y a une semaine j'ai vu Schoen, il me dit que le Baron d'Aehrenthal l'avait prévenu de l'annexion comme d'une éventualité lointaine et manifesta une certaine inquiétude au sujet des projets Autrichiens. Je n'ai pas manqué de la mettre au courant de ce qui précède Tittoni que j'ai vu mardi dernier, n'en savait rien, et s'est montré très ému de cette perspective. Après y avoir pensé il m'a dit que l'Italie ne soulèverait pas à cette occasion la question de Tripoli, et se contenterait, comme compensation morale, de l'évacuation du Sanjak de Novi Bazar (à quoi il attache beaucoup d'importance) et de l'abolition de l'Art 29 limitant les droits du Monténégro.

"Pour ce qui est de la Bulgarie, nous avons fait savoir à Sofia de la manière la plus catégorique que nous désapprouverions la proclamation par elle de son indépendence, et que si elle y procédait sans notre assentiment, elle le ferait à ses risques et périls et que nous ne lui porterions aucun secours moral ou matériel Nous avons ajouté le conseil de patienter, et si l'Autriche-Hongrie se décidait à annexer la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine ceci donnerait probablement lieu à une révision du Traité de Berlin au cours de laquelle nous pourrions soutenir sa prétension."

[The source of this information has not been indicated in the material collected by Sir Sidney Lee]

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MON CHER AMI—Il me tient à cœur de T'avertir moi-même et en personne d'une décision importante que je me verrai sous peu obligé de prendre et que Tu jugeras—j'en suis sûr—dans l'esprit de l'amitié intime et traditionnelle qui nous unit. Il s'agit d'un problème dont la solution ne saurait être ajournée sans danger pour le développement pacifique des événements à proximité des frontières de mes Pays.

Le sort de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine à été en 1878 sur l'initiative des délégués britanniques confié à l'Autriche-Hongrie dans le but d'y établir une administration stable et forte. Ces provinces sont arrivées depuis, grâce aux soins assidus de mon Gouvernement, à un haut degré de culture matérielle et intellectuelle, elles aspirent donc légitimement aux bienfaits d'un régime autonome et Constitutionnel, régime que mon Gouvernement ne croit pas pouvoir leur refuser plus longtemps en présence des événements imprévus qui viennent de se dérouler en Turquie.

Or, il ne paraît pas possible de procéder à l'octroi d'une constitution pour la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine avant d'avoir réglé d'une manière définitive la situation politique de ces provinces.

Ce ne sont donc pas des considérations d'utilité politique mais les exigences imperieuses de la situation qui m'obligeront à procéder à l'annexation de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine.

J'ai soin d'ajouter que la décision que je me verrai obligé de prendre ne changera en rien l'orientation conservatrice de la politique de l'Autriche-Hongrie et que mon Gouvernement observera aussi à l'avenir les principes de désintéressement qu'il a établis à maintes reprises.

C'est dans cet ordre d'idées que j'ai autorisé mon gouvernement à renoncer au moment de l'annexation de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine à l'exercice des droits militaires et administratifs que le traité de Berlin nous a conférés dans le Sandjak de Novibazar. Le rappel immédiat de mes troupes qui actuellement y tiennent garnison sanctionnera cette renonciation.

Je te prie de croire aux sentiments de sincère amitié de Ton frère et ami, FRANÇOIS JOSEPH.

The letter was sent to Mensdorff, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London, who, however, was instructed not to present it to the King until 5th October. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Paris, who was charged with a similar letter to the President of the French Republic, ignored his similar instructions and presented the letter to the President on the afternoon of 3rd October, when, in reply to a question about the proclamation of Bulgarian independence, he said, "That is all arranged; Bulgaria will precede us by one day."

Approximately at the same hour Sir Edward Goschen asked Aehrenthal officially whether there was any truth in reports of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence. Aehrenthal replied, "No truth at all There is not a word about it in our reports from Sofia." Goschen dutifully reported this lie, his telegram reaching the Foreign Office about the same time as a telegram from Paris reporting the statement of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador there to the President of the Republic [1]

On 3rd October Mensdorff saw Sir Charles Hardinge at the Foreign Office and handed to him a private letter from Baron von Aehrenthal, in which Aehrenthal acquainted him with the intention of the Austrian government to proclaim very shortly the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while renouncing at the same time any further share in the occupation of the Sandjak of Novi Bazar Mensdorff now mentioned to Hardinge that he was the bearer of a private letter from the Emperor of Austria to the King, in which the Emperor announced the decision of his government. Hardinge at once telegraphed the news to the King at Balmoral; thus the contents of the Emperor's letter were known to the King before he received it. When Count Mensdorff eventually reached Balmoral with the Emperor's autograph letter, he found himself in a frozen atmosphere. The King received him with great coolness and quickly read the Emperor's missive. The news it contained, the method of conveying it, were strongly resented by the King, who deemed it a breach of confidence for a private letter to be sent through an Ambassador. Mensdorff was dismissed with a few formal and unconciliatory words. The betrayal, which made the Treaty of Berlin into a "scrap of paper," was a violent shock to King Edward.

"No one," relates Lord Redesdale, "who was there can forget how terribly he was upset. Never did I see him so moved. He had paid the Emperor of Austria a visit at Ischl less than two months before. The meeting had been friendly and affectionate, ending with a hearty 'auf baldiges Wiedersehen.' . . . The two sovereigns and their two statesmen had discussed the Eastern question—especially the Balkan difficulties—with the utmost apparent intimacy, and the King left Ischl in the full assurance that there was no cloud on the horizon. Now, without a word of warning, all was changed." [2]

[1] Wickham Steed's letter to *The Times*, 21st May 1925.
[2] Lord Redesdale's Memoirs.

The King regarded the Emperor of Austria's silence on the subject during their recent meeting at Ischl as almost amounting to a breach of faith, and bluntly remarked that Aehrenthal had lied to Sir E. Goschen. Early in the next week Goschen called on Aehrenthal and taxed him formally with untruthfulness. Aehrenthal took refuge in another falsehood, apparently imagining that Goschen was a man he could fool with impunity. But before leaving for Berlin, Goschen squared accounts with him. At a banquet given by the Emperor Francis Joseph in honour of King George of Greece, Aehrenthal complained to Goschen of the hostility shown by the British press towards the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and declared that England was thus incurring "a very heavy responsibility." Goschen replied that the responsibility lay rather with Austria-Hungary who had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin, whereupon Aehrenthal broke out into denunciation of the conduct of England during the Boer war. Goschen replied that the Boer war had nothing to do with the matter, and added pointedly, "In any case, England did not violate an international treaty, as you have done. That is the truth; but you, my dear Minister, do not love the truth." [1]

V

Two days before Austria's formal announcement of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who had been received a fortnight earlier at Budapest by Francis Joseph with royal honours, ceremoniously proclaimed the complete independence of Bulgaria from Turkish suzerainty, and assumed the mediæval title of "Tsar." When the Kaiser heard of the action he promptly, and without any shadow of justification, attempted to lay the blame for it on the shoulders of King Edward. To a letter from Bülow on the situation dated 6th October 1908 the Kaiser added the marginal comment:

> I consider that the whole of the action in Bulgaria is due to King Edward VII., who was informed of it at Marienbad. The Baron (*i.e.* Prince Ferdinand) is wholly in his power and works together with him. The King is attempting, as far as he can—according to the statements of men of authority in the City—to

[1] Wickham Steed's letter to *The Times*, 21st May 1925.

do harm to German capital Much of this is involved in the Bagdad Railway, and the political stroke is therefore conceivable. King Edward asked me in Friedrichshof suddenly whether I had any objection to Ferdinand becoming King I answered that he was a vassal of the Sultan, and therein lay the answer to such a question. And besides, what does Franz Joseph think about it? King Edward answered, "Oh, he wants to know nothing about it." Now, I suppose, the independence of Bulgaria on the ground of the new circumstances in Stamboul will be declared with the help of England and Russia, and German money will be besieged. The insignias of the Crown are ready and, in fact, already displayed at Munich. I advise that we draw Roumania into it also, and interest Athens; they both of them are at enmity with Bulgaria! And if Bulgaria wants to go to extremes, it would be just as well to have a contre-Alliance with Turkey! [1]

The Kaiser, as was not perhaps infrequent, had again grasped the wrong end of the stick. It was true that the King had heard of the projected action of Bulgaria, but there was not the slightest foundation for the Kaiser's suspicion that Prince Ferdinand's action was due to the King or that he had approved of it

On 7th October Francis Joseph issued the formal proclamation to the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina formally announcing the annexation of those provinces. Serbia at once protested vigorously to the Powers. Her Parliament was immediately convoked and the war spirit flamed up and threatened to get beyond control. That day the Greek population in the island of Crete repudiated the nominal suzerainty of Turkey and demanded immediate union with Greece. Prince Ferdinand, as far as he was concerned, was prepared to defend the independence of the new Bulgarian state by going to war with Turkey if necessary.

These startling events immediately aroused intense excitement throughout Europe. The crisis precipitated by the actions of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria brought all the great Powers signatory to the Treaty of Berlin upon the scene. It became quickly apparent that they did not agree. Germany made it clear that she would support Austria, and Italy seemed likely to do the same. The Triple Alliance, therefore, remained firm. In another group were Great Britain, France, and Russia, all plainly irritated at this cynical flouting of the Treaty. A hurried interchange of

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol XXVI. i. p. 73.

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diplomatic notes ensued. The British Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, announced that Great Britain could not admit "the right of any Power to alter an international treaty without the consent of the other parties to it," and demanded that, as the Treaty of Berlin had been made by all the great Powers, it could only be revised by them, meeting again in congress. But neither Austria nor Germany would listen to this suggestion. They knew that Russia could not intervene, lamed as she was by the disastrous war with Japan, with her army disorganised and her finances in bad condition. And they had no fear of Great Britain and France. Thus the Treaty of Berlin was wantonly repudiated.

The result threatened to lead to a decisive breach between the King and the aged Emperor: the Austrian press at once denounced the King for his hostility and called him "agent provocateur." The King however, while urging on his ministers the most emphatic protest against Austria's action, sought to facilitate a peaceful solution to the crisis. Lord Morley, who was staying at Balmoral at the time, thus relates his impressions of the King's attitude of mind:

At the station at Aberdeen I came upon Mensdorff fresh from Vienna on his way to Balmoral, and the bearer of a special message to His Majesty. You know the intense interest of the King in foreign policy, and his intimate first-hand knowledge both of the players and the cards in the Balkan game. When I was up here last autumn he found time to take me two long drives through the forest, and splendid scenery it is. I did not much wonder when he told me that if he could have chosen his life he would have liked to be a landscape gardener. It will need a clever set of gardeners, with good strong axes, to trim the diabolic Balkan thickets. I admired the diligence, attention, and shrewd sense with which he tackled the cunning tangle.[1]

Four days later (October 11) the King, protestingly diplomatic, replied in his own hand to the Emperor's letter:

MON CHER AMI—Je viens de recevoir la lettre par laquelle Tu as bien voulu m'avertir de la décision importante que Tu as prise de procéder à l'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, et je tiens à Te remercier d'avoir pensé à me faire connaître Ta manière de voir d'une façon si conforme à notre amitié.

Cependant, je ne saurais que T'exprimer tous mes regrets de voir prendre une telle décision, surtout à l'heure où les événements

[1] Morley's *Recollections*, vol. ii. pp. 277-8.

survenus en Bulgarie ont déjà compromis la situation dans les états balkaniques.

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Aussi, je ne Te cacherai pas non plus que je tiens beaucoup aux principes consacrés dans le Protocole du 17 Janvier 1878, d'après lesquels le Traité de Berlin ne saurait être modifié sauf avec le consentiment des Puissances Contractantes, et surtout, dans le cas actuel, de la Turquie, qui est la Puissance la plus intéressée.

J'apprends avec un vif plaisir que Ta décision prise dans les circonstances ne changera en rien l'orientation conservatrice de la politique de l'Autriche-Hongrie, et je Te prie de croire aux sentiments de sincère amitié de Ton frère et ami,

EDWARD R. & I.

VI

The Kaiser professed to be as annoyed at Austria's action as King Edward, but neither he nor Bulow could affirm with truth that it had taken them by surprise, for a month earlier Schoen, in his report to Bülow from Berchtesgaden of a conversation with Aehrenthal on 4th September 1908, had quoted the Austrian minister as saying "that Austria-Hungary would not be able to help coming eventually to some settlement of the Bosnia-Herzegovinian question, and this solution could and would be no other than that of annexation." [1] Schoen's report was seen by the Kaiser at the time. Yet when the Kaiser heard of the actual annexation in October he was "annoyed that the Austrians did not reveal their plan of annexation to us earlier." [2] Even Bulow professed that Germany "did not hear of the Austrian plans till after the Russians and Italians, and at the same time as the other Powers." Bulow in his letter to Jenisch dated 7th October, which was seen by the Kaiser, pointed out that Austria's policy was to play off Bulgar against Serb, whereas

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol XXVI. i. pp. 26-7.

[2] *Ibid.* vol XXVI i pp. 110-11. Three months later the Kaiser wrote to the Tsar (January 5, 1909), in reply to the Tsar's frank appeal to him to use his influence for peace between Austria and Serbia, that the annexation "was a genuine surprise for everybody, but particularly so for us, as we were informed about Austria's intentions even later than you I think it my duty to call your attention to this, considering that Germany has been accused of having pushed Austria to take this step. . . . This allegation is absurd. . . The fact is that once Austria had taken this step without previously consulting us, hesitation as to the course we had to follow as loyal allies was out of the question. We could not side with her opponents. You will be the first to approve of this loyalty of ours" (*Die grosse Politik*, vol. XXVI. ii. pp 388-9).

reliance on the Turk would have been the better policy. ("Of course, the only thing to do," commented the Kaiser; "just what I told Aehrenthal in Vienna.") Bülow urged that it was important to find out "whether the Turks are still strong enough to wave the green banner and give the treacherous gallow-birds a thrashing." ("Quite right," commented the Kaiser.) "However that may be," continued Bülow, "this much is certain, that the circumstances attending the Austrian action, as well as its consequences, are highly undesirable for us." ("Yes, very," noted the Kaiser.) But he believed that loyalty to Austria paid "from the point of view not only of morals, but of expediency."

The Kaiser's concluding remarks on Bülow's letter ran:

> These statements are quite correct. I only regret that the fearful stupidity of Aehrenthal has got me into the dilemma of not being able to protect and support our friends the Turks, as it is my Ally who has wronged them. Instead, I have to see England counselling and befriending the Turks in place of myself, and doing so with arguments based on international law which are quite unassailable and are taken out of my very mouth. And so my Turkish policy built up laboriously for 20 years goes smash! A great score over us for Edward VII.! . . .[1]

VII

Diplomacy was now stretched to its farthest limit to conciliate Turkey, who had thus been deprived of the suzerainty of three provinces. Turkey claimed from Bulgaria arrears of tribute under the Treaty of Berlin, and England, France, Russia, and Italy urged on Bulgaria the justice of Turkey's claim. But Bulgaria showed little disposition to come to terms and there were threats of war. The public declarations of both Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary overlooked the infringement of the Treaty of Berlin, which the Powers had solemnly agreed to respect. The British, French, and Russian Ambassadors at Constantinople were instructed to tell the Porte that all changes in the Treaty of Berlin required the assent of all the signatories, and a British squadron was sent to the Aegean as a symbol of sympathy and support.

Meanwhile Isvolsky, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs,

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. XXVI. i. pp. 110-11.

had arrived in London for a week's stay in response to the King's invitation whilst at Marienbad. He was elaborately fêted. As Metternich reported to the German Foreign Office (October 9, 1908):

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Isvolsky, who is nowise trusted here, is being entertained and flattered, to-morrow to dinner by the elegant circle of gentlemen and lady friends of the King, Sunday to dinner at Buckingham Palace, which date was already fixed in Marienbad, Monday to dinner at Sir Edward Grey's. In the next few days we shall see whether the English-Russian Entente will survive the Dardanelles question.[1]

After an interview with the King, Isvolsky telegraphed to St. Petersburg that the King had declared that the Balkan difficulties could be settled only by means of a conference, and that he had asked him to do his utmost during his proposed stay in Berlin to persuade the Kaiser's government not only themselves to support a proposal for a conference but also to persuade Austria to submit to one. Isvolsky wrote that he was entirely with the King's view and sincerely hoped that the German government would be of the same opinion.[2]

One of the objects of Isvolsky's visit was to secure British approval of the opening of the Dardanelles to Russian warships, and within two days of his arrival he had sounded leading British ministers on the subject. On 12th October the matter came before the cabinet. That day Mr. Asquith, in reporting to the King that Russia and France desired a conference of ambassadors to consider all the problems involved by the actions of Austria and Bulgaria, added that Isvolsky had roused the "delicate and difficult question" between Russia and Turkey of the freedom of the Straits. The King, who was now at Buckingham Palace, dictated the reply (October 13).

The King has read with very great interest Mr. Asquith's report of the deliberations of yesterday's cabinet.

He entirely concurs with the decision the cabinet have come to respecting the question of a conference, and of what is proposed in connection with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the declaration of the independence of Bulgaria. . . .

With respect to the more important point, that of the

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, vol. XXVI i. p. 122.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. XXVI. i. p. 169.

Dardanelles, the King is afraid that unless some hope is given to Russia that England and the other Powers might grant the national aspirations of Russia on this question, that Monsieur Isvolsky will return to his country a discredited man, and will have to resign, and it is impossible to say who his successor might be. The King feels that after the Russian convention with England of a year ago, we are bound, if we wish to retain her friendship, to give way on this important point. He hopes the cabinet are looking at this question from a European and International point of view and not from merely a domestic one.

Mr. Asquith replied the same day that, with respect to the Dardanelles, he concurred with Sir E. Grey, Mr. Haldane, and Mr. McKenna in the view that "the existing restrictions on Russia's freedom of egress are of no strategic value to Great Britain. Further, the cabinet as a whole is most anxious to work, as far as possible, hand in hand with Russia, and to facilitate the success of M. Isvolsky's mission." But Lord Crewe and Lord Morley had pointed out that the proposal put forward by Isvolsky was wholly one-sided, and "offers us nothing in return for the surrender of a right of old standing, which has in the eyes probably of a majority of our people at any rate a considerable sentimental value." Mr. Asquith added that he had learnt from Sir E. Grey that Isvolsky would now be content with an arrangement which, while giving Russia egress from the Black Sea at all times (under reasonable conditions) and securing her from menace, would yet contain "such an element of reciprocity as would *in time of war* place belligerents on an equal footing with regard to the passage of the Straits," and he thought that the cabinet would agree to a settlement of the matter on this footing.

The King replied that "what is being arranged is very satisfactory, and he quite agrees with what is proposed. He is very glad also to find that you and Grey, together with Haldane and McKenna, concur in thinking that the existing restrictions as regards the Dardanelles are of no strategic value."

Conversations between Grey and Isvolsky continued on the 14th, and it was evident that an agreement might be come to upon the basis of equal reciprocal rights in event of war, but if Russia and England were at war then England should have that right of passage. Sir Edward Grey, however, urged the inopportuneness of raising the question with Turkey at the moment, and promised that when a more propitious moment should arise

he would himself use his influence with the Turkish government to obtain their consent.

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The answer secured the hearty co-operation of Russia. Isvolsky was most favourably impressed by the straightforward character of Sir E. Grey and by his conversations with some of the other ministers, and a complete agreement on all questions at issue was reached Yet so ignorant was Isvolsky of the elementary principles of party government that at a dinner in his honour at the Foreign Office on 13th October (as Sir Charles Hardinge informed the King on 14th October) he discussed with Mr. Balfour, the leader of the Opposition, all the questions he had been negotiating with Sir E. Grey. But Balfour was not the person to take unfair advantage of an obvious indiscretion, and informed Grey of what had been said. Throughout the negotiations, Sir Charles Hardinge wrote directly to the King of every turn in the course of events. To the letter last quoted the King added the autograph comment:

> Please thank Hardinge for his interesting letter and the information it contains. All Sir E. Grey's mem.s and dispatches (in this box) are perhaps the most interesting I have ever received, and I congratulate him on having come to a successful issue in his arguments and conversations with M. Isvolsky, which have been of the most difficult and delicate nature

VIII

While Isvolsky was on his travels, Russia without his approval proposed to intervene on her own motion in the disturbed affairs of Persia, and was dispatching troops to Tabriz where civil war had broken out. Such independent action on Russia's part was resented by the British Foreign Office, and the rumour spread that the step had been taken behind Isvolsky's back in order to discredit him in English eyes and to prejudice his whole foreign policy. On 20th October Hardinge informed the King that in deference to Sir E. Grey's representations the Russian government had ordered the troops destined for Tabriz to be detained on the frontier and not to cross unless there was real danger to the lives of Russians in Tabriz.

Isvolsky was much upset when he learned the news of the dispatch of Russian troops to Tabriz, and the threat of his

resignation resulted in the orders being cancelled. Although the reversal of the orders had revealed the strength of his position, there was no doubt that it had been greatly undermined and his fall was not impossible. Hardinge immediately reported the fact to the King (October 22) and asked whether "a letter from your Majesty to the Emperor might not be of some help, but your Majesty is better able than I am to express an opinion on this point."

The King, who had thoroughly believed in Isvolsky's statesmanship and honesty, readily adopted Sir Charles Hardinge's suggestion that he should write directly to the Tsar testifying to the high opinion he had formed of the Russian minister. Accordingly he wrote on 27th October :

> I am anxious to tell you how pleased I was to have the opportunity of meeting M. Isvolsky again, particularly glad that he should have come to London and have made the acquaintance of my ministers. With them he had several opportunities of discussing all questions of interest to Russia and to England.
>
> His interviews with Sir Edward Grey have been of the greatest use, and they have resulted in establishing a feeling of confidence between the Foreign Ministers of our two countries and in an agreement being come to upon a common line of action in the present crisis in the Balkans.
>
> You know how anxious I am for the most friendly relations between Russia and England not only in Asia but also in Europe, and I feel confident that through your M. Isvolsky these hopes will be realised.
>
> As you may remember, I met M. Isvolsky for the first time at Copenhagen some four or five years ago. I have had several very interesting conversations with him on the subject of a possible improvement in the relations of our two countries. I met him again at Reval and at Marienbad both last year and this, and recently here, and I have on each occasion been more and more impressed by his ability—and I must say that he pleased me very much.

The Tsar's reply is not recorded, but Isvolsky retained his office until after the King's death, when he was appointed Russian Ambassador to France.

IX

Meanwhile Serbia, considerably perturbed by Austria's action, made strenuous efforts to win the sympathy of England,

and if possible of King Edward. It was suggested that the Crown Prince of Serbia should visit England in November. The King at first approved of the visit, but on 27th October, in view of the agitation prevailing at Belgrade, he became "strongly of the opinion that if possible the Crown Prince should be prevented coming to England until a certain time has elapsed and certainly not in November."

Three days previously M. Milanovitch, the Serbian Foreign Minister, had arrived in London. He, too, was very anxious to see the King, and urged that it would be regarded as a mark of great favour to the Serbian nation if he could be received in a private audience. But the King realised that such an audience might encourage hopes that could not be fulfilled, especially as England was "not in the position to promise anything," and he wisely declined to see him. Milanovitch, however, had long conversations with Sir E. Grey and Sir Charles Hardinge, in which he pointed out that if all compensation was refused by Austria, Serbia would devote all her resources to preparation for war at a favourable moment, since she would then realise that a policy of pacific development could have no future for her. Sir E. Grey expressed his doubts whether it would be possible to obtain territorial compensation for Serbia, but he promised to give moral and diplomatic support to Russia in putting forward Serbian claims. In conversation with Sir Charles Hardinge the Serbian minister again asked if, by waiting in London, he could have the honour of being received by the King in audience, but Hardinge replied that the King had engagements in the country "till the end of next week," and that he feared it would be impossible for an audience to be granted. Milanovitch accepted the diplomatic reply.[1]

On that same day (October 28) Mr. W. E. O'Reilly, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Cettinge, had an audience with Prince Nicholas of Montenegro, who suggested a visit to London of his heir-apparent, Prince Danilo, who had attended the King's Coronation. But the King noted:

> It would in every respect be far better that he should be strongly discouraged from coming here, or Crown Prince of Serbia will do the same. The arrival of one or more Princes would be very inconvenient during King of Sweden's visit.

[1] Hardinge to King, 28th October.

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Within a week, two Princes had asked for interviews with the King in order to put their views before him—rare tributes to his influence and diplomatic prestige.

X

November dawned with improved prospects of a peaceful settlement of all difficulties. There was the possibility of direct negotiations with Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey, in which event a conference of European Powers would be required only to ratify the agreements arrived at. But before November was out there were signs that the difficulties would have to be settled by *force majeure.* The situation singularly resembled that which occurred six years later, when the long-threatening war-cloud actually burst. In both cases Serbia, backed by England and Russia, wished to submit her claims to a conference of the Powers, and in each case Austria raised the objection that such a conference would be too like a tribunal before which Austria would have to appear in the light of a defendant. Aehrenthal, backed by Germany, was obstinately delaying a settlement, and the outlook became very ominous. Germany's attitude was that the Bosnian question did not directly affect her, but that while anxious to favour the new Turkish régime she was bound to stand by her ally of Austria. She recognised no need for a conference, and ridiculed the aspirations of Serbia. The only question that Germany regarded as at issue was the compensation which Austria and Bulgaria would make to Turkey for losses sustained by the new arrangements.

The autumn of 1908 passed with Europe in agitation, though no state cared or dared to challenge Austria to ordeal by battle. Germany was loyal, Italy negligible, Russia weak, France indifferent, Great Britain pacific. "Your Sir Edward Grey wants peace," remarked Aehrenthal to British visitors; and when he was warned not to underrate British influence, he replied, "What can England do to us?" His confidence was strengthened by the speeches of Bülow and Isvolsky in the closing days of the year. On 7th December the German Chancellor combined judicious homage to the Young Turks with unflinching support of his ally, whilst Isvolsky's long-deferred speech to the Duma on 24th December was pitched in the minor key, and virtually admitted

that the game was lost. In spite of Aehrenthal's previous assurances to Isvolsky, Russian claims had been ignored and there was no compensation for her on the side of the Dardanelles—a galling slight. Isvolsky was angry, but Aehrenthal had speculated safely on Russia's weakness and had humiliated a man of more brilliant mind, but of much less sinewy and wary character Isvolsky explained that Russia's freedom of action in the Bosnian question was barred by the pacts of thirty years. To protest without the intention to fight would have been madness. The only course was to press for a conference, after a preliminary discussion between the cabinets The mildness of his language, so different from his earlier utterances, was attributed at Vienna to Aehrenthal's threat to publish the documents unless Isvolsky ceased to attack his good faith. Isvolsky's weakness excited the King's disdain [1]

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By December the idea of a conference was already fading away. Austria declined to attend without a preliminary agreement and unless a discussion of the annexation was ruled out; and if her actions were to be condoned in advance it seemed futile to bring the Powers together in solemn conclave. There were, however, three urgent problems to be liquidated—the relations of Austria to Turkey and to Serbia, and the relations of Bulgaria to Turkey —but the solution was hindered by the uncompromising attitude of Austria.

XI

With the dawn of the new year there was very little slackening of the tension The King rightly regarded Austria as the cause of the trouble, and wished to express his disapproval by declining to invite the Austrian Ambassador to Windsor. Hardinge quite understood the King's annoyance, but begged him (January 19) not to leave out Mensdorff, who would be the only Ambassador uninvited to Windsor, as further bitter attacks on the King in the Austrian press would follow, and the King deferred to his representations.

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[1] Four months later (April 7, 1909) Hardinge wrote to the King that the reason for Isvolsky's cringing attitude was because there was "absolutely no doubt that Aehrenthal has in his pocket a paper in which Isvolsky has thoroughly compromised himself, and had promised to recognise the annexation of Bosnia, provided that Austria would agree to the opening of the Dardanelles. He is terrified lest Aehrenthal should some day publish this document, and it is the threat of publication which has made him cave in in such an ignominious manner to the Germans quite recently. He is a very unscrupulous and unreliable man"

Asquith reported to the King that Baron von Aehrenthal agreed that "if we could concur in the terms of the note which it was proposed that Serbia should send to Austria, he would not ask for any such promise from us (as has been, with the assistance of Germany, extracted from Russia) for the recognition of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, until mediation with Serbia had been tried and had either succeeded or failed." Grey with the approval of the cabinet agreed to concur in the terms of the proposed Serbian note, and, if Serbia took the advice of the Powers in regard to sending the note, and it was favourably received as satisfactory at Vienna, Great Britain was ready to recognise in principle the annexation. That day Hardinge informed the King that the Serbian crisis was

"practically over, since the Serbians have accepted our Note which they will to-day address to the Austrian government, and, as soon as Aehrenthal has sent a conciliatory reply—of which I believe there is no doubt whatever—the crisis may be said to be finished. But," he added significantly, "there can be little doubt that the Serbians will deeply resent the humiliation which they have suffered at the hands of Austria, while the Russians will never be able to forget the fact that Austria and Germany availed themselves of the moment of Russia's weakness to harass her in a humiliating and hectoring manner. . . ."

Peace was now assured. Austria accepted the Serbian answer to her note, and a week later (April 8 and 9) the Great Powers signatory to the Treaty of Berlin signified their assent to the abrogation of its 25th clause, thereby recognising the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

XIII

Hardinge's forecast was correct: the Serbian crisis had passed, and with it the main menace to the continuance of peace. Turkey was induced to accept the change in the status of both the two provinces and of the principality of Bulgaria in return for financial compensation from Austria and Bulgaria. Germany and Austria had won the diplomatic victory. In his letters to the Tsar the Kaiser pretended that he and his fellow-sovereign had preserved the peace of Europe.

"I very naturally expected," he wrote from Corfu on 8th May 1909, "that you and I would win universal applause, and I venture to think that we have earned the gratitude of all well-meaning people But to my regret and astonishment a great many blame us both instead; especially the Press in general has behaved in the basest way against me. By some means I am credited with being the author of annexation and am accused among other rot and nonsense of having humiliated Russia by my peace proposals! Of course you know better."

But Aehrenthal's annexation policy, with its accompanying campaign against the Southern Slavs, ended miserably. Save that it secured for the Hapsburgs the formal possession of provinces which they had administered for thirty years and were not in any danger of losing, it failed in every respect. It aroused against the Dual Monarchy the ill-will of England and France as well as of Russia and Italy It ended by bringing Austria into complete subservience to Germany, into lasting discord with Russia.

One of the remarkable incidents of the campaign was the vicious and vituperative attack on the King in the Austrian press, which the King did not forget. When the waves of political excitement which ran so high during the annexation crisis had to some extent been stilled, King Edward paid his customary visit to Marienbad in the August of 1909, where he again met Mr. Wickham Steed and spoke indignantly of the Austrian press attacks "They lied about me; they lied about me!" he repeatedly exclaimed in so loud a voice that bystanders were startled. There had, indeed, been some doubt whether the King would come to Marienbad in 1909 at all, so strong was his resentment at Austria's behaviour. But the British Ambassador, Sir Fairfax Cartwright, who had succeeded Sir Edward Goschen at the Vienna Embassy, argued that the King's presence would ease the situation and declared that Aehrenthal had become anxious for good relations with England. Sir Fairfax Cartwright was convinced that Aehrenthal was eager to turn over a new leaf, and at Marienbad, on 18th August 1909, he advised the King to congratulate Aehrenthal upon being raised by the Emperor to rank of Count for having carried through the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The King's Austrian friends, Slatin Pasha and Prince Charles Kinsky, added their appeals to those of Cartwright. But the King refused to congratulate the man who

had nearly caused a European war. Those who imagined that it would have been good policy for the King to discredit himself in order to gain Aehrenthal's favour, learned in time that such favour was hardly worth having.

The British Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey, pleaded in a manner little appreciated at the time for a principle vital to the world—that treaty engagements entered into by a number of Powers ought not to be changed without consultation among them; and that no one signatory Power ought to be able to turn any treaty into "a scrap of paper" by single and arbitrary action. That was the great contention on which peace or war for the world depended in July 1914.

Serbia, although silenced for a time, was unappeased, and less than six years later, on 23rd June 1914, the heir to the throne of Austria and his consort met their deaths in the streets of Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia, at the hands of assassins. The crime, which was the outcome of the annexation of 1909, hurled Europe into the world of war which King Edward foresaw and did what he could to prevent.

Prior to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the King, although frequently alarmed at Germany's pursuit of world power, had been of the opinion that a European conflict could be prevented by the removal of points of discord between the nations, and it was this belief that encouraged his unwavering support of the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian ententes; but now he realised that the aggressive spirit which imbued German statecraft had been caught by Austria, and that so long as that spirit persisted Europe would never be free from the threat of war. It was this realisation that led him in the following April to ask Mr. Asquith "whether in framing the Budget the cabinet took into consideration the possible (but the King hopes improbable) event of a European war."

CHAPTER XXVIII

MR. ASQUITH ASSUMES POWER

I

THROUGHOUT the exciting events abroad the King had never been out of touch with home affairs. The resignation and death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had given him as his new Prime Minister and his Chancellor of the Exchequer two men with whom he had little in common. Hitherto the Prime Ministers of England had been either connected with the nobility or with the wealthy families of the land. But the new Prime Minister was a forcible representative of the middle class, and the new Chancellor of the Exchequer a Welsh solicitor of extremely humble origin. Their accession to high office marked the last step that took the government of the country out of aristocratic territory into the domain where the great middle class reigned supreme. Lord Salisbury's government of 1895–1902 had been traditionally aristocratic, there being no less than ten peers in the cabinet. Mr. Balfour followed in his uncle's footsteps, as a dutiful nephew should, by retaining eight peers in the cabinet. Campbell-Bannerman's accession to power marked the beginning of the change, but it was not until Asquith succeeded Campbell-Bannerman that the end of the aristocratic domination loomed in sight, and the main history of Mr. Asquith's tenure of office as a peace Prime Minister is the history of his efforts to neutralise the power of that last aristocratic stronghold—the House of Lords.

It was singular that the new Prime Minister should have appointed as his chief lieutenant a politician of experience so limited and of a record so turbulent as Mr. Lloyd George. He had, it is true, "done well" as the President of the Board of

Trade from 1906 to 1908, but had scarcely justified translation to an office usually reserved to ripe statesmanship. One of Mr. Asquith's weaknesses was an over-relish for men of his own educational attainments which led him to underestimate other types which have also their place in parliamentary government. It is thus doubtful whether of his own free will he would ever have placed Mr. Lloyd George at the Exchequer, but there happened to be a singular dearth of mature ability of the desired kind. In Mr. Reginald McKenna, indeed, Mr. Asquith had detected something like a genius for finance. His clear, masculine, orderly, and highly cultivated mind was sufficiently of the Asquithian pattern to recommend him to the Prime Minister. But Mr. Asquith was in a difficult position. His succession to the Premiership, though undisputed, was hardly popular, and he could not afford to begin with a first-class quarrel with a potentially dangerous rival; and Mr. Lloyd George contrived to make it clear that peace could be purchased only at one price. A certain antagonism between the two statesmen dates from this time; yet on the side of the younger man there was affection and admiration, and on the part of the elder more than one striking display of chivalry. Mr. Asquith's love of a quiet life must often have been disturbed by the dynamic Welshman, and doubtless he often sighed for a more cautious administrator at the Exchequer; while to Mr. Lloyd George, conscious of his own powers, oratorical and strategic, there could hardly fail to occur some little feeling of resentment at the bland discouragement of so many of his democratic enthusiasms.[1]

The King, with his prudent adaptability, strove to accommodate himself to the new atmosphere, and though he differed acutely from his new Prime Minister on many subjects, he always treated him with a genial kindness that smoothed away hindrances to their better relationships. But the acute difference of outlook between the royal descendant of Alfred the Great and the Welsh demagogue was too great to be bridged by mere superficial courtesies. It was on Women's Suffrage and the Reform of the House of Lords that the two minds clashed most acutely. On the former question, that of Women's Suffrage, even members of the cabinet held antagonistic views. The King was a convinced opponent of female suffrage, and viewed

[1] E. T. Raymond's *Life of Lloyd George.*

with deep displeasure the coercive outrages organised by the militant suffragettes.

On 5th December 1908 the Chancellor of the Exchequer addressed a meeting of the Women's Liberal Association at the Albert Hall in favour of the suffrage, at which he repeated the ministerial promise to bring the question of women's enfranchisement before the House of Commons He was, however, constantly interrupted by the militant section, and there were scenes of great disorder. Lloyd George warned the suffragettes that they were ruining their cause, in which he expressed his faith, but his pacific words had no influence on the determined supporters of militant methods

Two days previously the King had written to Mr. Asquith that he was "rather disgusted at seeing in to-day's *Times* that Lloyd George is to preside at the Albert Hall meeting *pro* Women's Suffrage, which he understands you are certainly not in favour of." The King thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's presence as chairman at such a meeting was a "most improper thing," and that it showed an "entire absence of good judgement, good taste, and propriety," and he added, "I shall have no more to do with him than what is absolutely necessary." Mr. Asquith replied on 7th December that the King had somewhat misapprehended the facts Months ago, he pointed out, Mr. Lloyd George had promised to speak for the constitutional section of the Women's Suffrage movement, and when the militant suffragettes threatened disturbance he wanted to avoid the meeting, but was kept to his promise. He did not take the chair. He had given his word not to commit the government in any way and had kept it. Asquith pointed out that female suffrage was an open question in the cabinet; that Haldane and Grey were for it, whilst he himself was against it. The King, however, in spite of the misunderstanding as to Lloyd George's actual position at the meeting, thought that if Lloyd George had been in earnest in wishing to avoid speaking he "could have got out of the engagement."

Throughout the remainder of the reign the question of Women's Suffrage proved an insoluble problem, and both Mr. Asquith and Mr. H. (afterwards Viscount) Gladstone, the Home Secretary, were in constant explanatory communication with the King on the subject.

II

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It was not only on the subject of Women's Suffrage that the King disagreed with his new Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the August of 1908 the King was much annoyed not only with Lloyd George but also with Winston Churchill, who was working in strict concert with him, for intervening in foreign policy by irresponsible speeches. Winston Churchill, in a vigorous address to a miners' demonstration at Swansea on 15th August 1908, deprecated professions of antagonism between England and Germany, and deplored Lord Cromer's warnings against the German menace. He utterly repudiated the idea that a war with Germany was inevitable, and denied that in any part of the world there was any cause for collision between the two countries. He urged that it was never worth while fighting for the sake of trade; that the status of the Colonies and India would remain unchanged even after a British defeat; and that there was nothing else to fight for except tropical plantations and scattered coaling stations. Germany, he said, had "nothing to fight about, no prize to fight for, no place to fight in; and we rejoiced as a nation in everything bringing good to that strong, patient, industrious German people."

Meanwhile Lloyd George was visiting Germany to study the German system of industrial insurance with an eye to the introduction at home of old age pensions. His tour of Germany was so important in its results as to be almost a part of national history. He drank, though "almost a teetotaller," glasses of "foaming beer" with the Imperial Chancellor; he was entertained at the Berlin Zoological Gardens; he was shown the wreck of a Zeppelin at Stuttgart. He studied the German system of national insurance—"a superb scheme it is," he was to say next year in introducing his Budget—and resolved that something like it must be introduced at home. Incidentally, he incautiously allowed himself to be interviewed by a representative of the Austrian *Neue Freie Presse*, to whom he declared himself zealously in favour of an Anglo-German understanding. Another remark attributed to him by the German press implied anxiety ostentatiously to curry favour with Germany. The manner in which he was fêted and flattered confirmed him in his conviction of the friendly disposition of Germany, while he returned full of admiration for German bureaucratic methods.[1]

[1] E. T. Raymond's *Life of Lloyd George*.

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Objection was taken at home to his activities, on the ground that his statements to the Austrian press were irregular and were likely to undermine the position of the Foreign Secretary. The King, in particular, took the view that cabinet ministers ought not to make pronouncements on foreign policy without the sanction of the Foreign Minister He was " much annoyed with Lloyd George and Winston Churchill " for their intrusion into domains not strictly their own, and on 30th August 1908 Lord Knollys drafted a letter to be sent to Mr. Asquith expressing the King's displeasure at the behaviour of the two ministers, and especially protesting against the way Lloyd George had behaved in Germany and deprecating his utterances there. The King's Secretary pointed out that Grey's difficulties at the Foreign Office were increased by irresponsible ministerial speeches, and that Lloyd George's appointment of Harold Spender (who, as a member of the staff of the *Daily Chronicle*, was interviewing people in Germany, and using a privileged position for journalistic scoops) as his private secretary was unfitting. The King not unnaturally thought Spender's activities a scandal, but on reflection telegraphed to Knollys from Marienbad, " Letter not to be sent, am writing." In the event the King thought the reproof could best be administered directly by Sir E. Grey. Sir Edward, acting on the King's suggestion, not only rebuked the two ministers for their indiscretions, but even went so far as to point out to Winston Churchill the fallacy of some of the statements made by him in his speeches, and the undesirability of his embarking on questions of foreign policy on his tours through the constituencies.

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But whilst the King thus deplored the irresponsible activities of Lloyd George and Winston Churchill in the domain of foreign affairs, he highly approved of the attitude now being shown by Mr. Asquith, who, on 9th November 1908, in a statesmanlike review of foreign affairs, declared that while Britain raised no objections to direct negotiations between states affected by the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, any alteration of the Treaty of Berlin must be countersigned by Treaty Powers. He laid stress on the beneficial effect of the Anglo-Russian Convention, especially in regard to Persia, paid a tribute to the moderation of the Russian government in maintaining a policy of non-intervention, and mentioned that England and Russia

had urged the Shah to fulfil his promises to include Tabriz in the Constitution and to grant an amnesty. He went on to say that the government had no desire to see Europe divided into separate groups; they were in complete sympathy with France; they had been equally frank in their communications with Germany and Italy, and had taken up an entirely disinterested attitude. "We had neither animosities to gratify nor selfish interests to advance, and would grasp any hand extended in goodwill and good faith." With Germany, Great Britain wished to deal in the spirit of the Kaiser's declaration in that hall a year before. He ended by an assurance, with which for the moment he hoped the country would be content, that nothing would be left undone to keep the navy fully abreast of our national and imperial necessities: the command of the seas was the safeguard of our national existence.

At the King's behest Lord Knollys wrote to Mr. Asquith (November 11):

The King desires me to write and tell you how greatly pleased he was with your speech at the Guildhall, which he thought was excellent and showed a breadth of view and statesmanlike principles which gratified him very much to read and which will have a very good effect just now. He is especially glad that you said what you did about Russia in connection with the Persian question.

The letter concluded with the suggestion that Mr. Asquith should give Lloyd George a hint

that when he writes to the King he shall call himself the "Chancellor of the Exchequer," as has always been done from time immemorial, and not "Mr. Lloyd George."

The Prime Minister's Guildhall speech was praised by *The Times* as "not unworthy to rank for wisdom and courage with those of some of Mr. Asquith's illustrious predecessors"; and the almost simultaneous relaxation of the Franco-German tension regarding an unfortunate incident at Casablanca [1] helped

[1] See footnote, p. 673 *infra*.

In July 1907 some French navvies employed on the port works at Casablanca, a seaport town on the west coast of Morocco, were murdered. The French promptly bombarded the town and occupied the surrounding territory, thus entrenching themselves both in the east and west of the Promised Land. Drawing strength from the hostility to foreign encroachments, Mulai Hafid successfully raised the banner of revolt against his brother Mulai-Abd-el-Aziz

to encourage the hope that peace might be maintained in Europe. The believers in a strong navy as its safeguard were encouraged by the Prime Minister's reply in the House of Commons on 12th November—that the two-Power standard meant a preponderance of 10 per cent over the combined strength in capital ships of the two next strongest Powers. This was cheered from both sides; but its omission of the customary

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in the south, and was proclaimed Sultan at Fez in January 1908 By the end of the year Mulai Hafid, after promising to respect the Act of Algeciras, was recognised by the Powers He, however, failed to restore order The Riff tribesmen defied him in the north, and a new pretender, El Roghi, in the south

France and Germany now showed a desire to reach cordial relations, but these approaches were rudely interrupted in September 1908 by an incident which for some weeks threatened the peace of the world. Some German residents in Casablanca, aided by their Consul, had established in 1906 an agency for organising desertions from the Foreign Legion, and in September 1908 it persuaded two Germans, a German naturalised as a French citizen, a Russian, a Swiss, and an Austrian to desert. The Consul provided them with civilian clothing, hid them in the city for some days, and intended to embark them on a German steamer lying off the port. Early in the morning of 25th September they were accompanied to the harbour by a member of the Consulate; but the boat in which they embarked capsized and they were forced to return to the shore The Commandant of the harbour noticed them and gave orders to arrest them. A brief struggle ensued, and the German Consul loudly demanded the restoration of the three Germans

When the governments were informed, Austria declined to take action, but Germany demanded "prompt and complete satisfaction." France replied by demanding that the German Consul should be disavowed and censured. A fortnight later the German government proposed arbitration; but when Pichon accepted, Berlin demanded the punishment of the port authorities at Casablanca and the release of the three deserters, after which the German Consul would also be punished Pichon replied that the matter was now referred to arbitration The German Ambassador again demanded the prompt liberation of the three Germans and compensation for the two employees of the German Consulate who had been injured. Next day Bülow informed the French Ambassador that unless the second demand was conceded the Kaiser would recall his Ambassador. Pichon stood firm, and replied that he must await the arbitral award On 6th November Bulow made a final and equally fruitless attempt to procure an apology for the arrest of the deserters before the arbitration began. On 7th November the British and Russian Ambassadors informed the Quai d'Orsay that their governments fully approved the action and shared the policy of France. Two days later the Austrian Ambassador told Pichon that his master had urged the Kaiser, who was at that moment his guest, to settle the question amicably, and the Kaiser had agreed The crisis was over, and Kiderlen Wachter and Jules Cambon proceeded to sign a declaration regretting the events of 25th September and referring the questions of fact as well as of law to arbitration The verdict of the Hague Tribunal censured "the grave and manifest fault" of the Chancellor of the German Consulate in aiding the escape of the non-German legionaries. The French authorities had acted correctly, except that needless violence had been displayed in the arrest of the deserters. (Schoen's *Memoirs*, pp. 90-93, and G. P. Gooch's *History of Modern Europe, 1878–1919*, pp. 458-60.)

qualification "in Europe," which was confirmed a few days later, alarmed Liberal advocates of retrenchment.

Yet, although the King approved Mr. Asquith's attitude in public affairs, their relations were never cordial. Asquith always appeared to the King to be reticent, secretive, reserved. He was always assuring the King that he did not want to trouble him about difficult matters, and the King thought he was deliberately withholding information.

III

The King was as anxious as his ministers to see passed a satisfactory Education Act, and was pleased when, early in the session of 1908, Mr. McKenna was entrusted with a new Education Bill which seemed to carry good promise of success. It was believed that the religious objections had been satisfactorily met, and that, while all schools would be placed under the local authorities denominational teaching could be provided for children whose parents desired it at the expense of the denomination. The objections raised by the Church to the Bill on its first introduction did not seem insuperable, and although the Bishop of St. Asaph introduced to the House of Lords a measure of compromise which came up for second reading on 30th March, the debate was adjourned so that the measure might be considered in conjunction with the Government's Bill. Throughout the months that followed there seemed every possibility of a concordat.

On the 26th October the King saw the Archbishop of Canterbury and pleaded for a conciliatory attitude. Two days later Mr. Runciman, who had succeeded Mr. McKenna as Minister of Education, wrote to Lord Knollys:

> Since the King saw the Archbishop on Monday the Bishops met at Lambeth yesterday, and the Archbishop writes me that he is now able to repeat that the Bishops on the whole are in favour of a settlement of the Education controversy now. Some of his colleagues have raised unsurmountable points, and at their adjourned meeting this morning the Archbishop I understand is endeavouring to overcome these difficulties.
>
> The Nonconformist leaders have gone so far in their effort to reach a settlement, and have strained their people so far, that if

this effort fails the opportunity of making peace will have passed. But His Majesty's intervention in the interests of peace has borne such early fruit that I am writing now to tell you how far and definitely progress has been made

The King's autograph comment was: "This seems satisfactory."

With a view to appeasing the Church leaders Mr. Runciman introduced a fresh and, as it was believed, a more acceptable Bill in the autumn session, and on 20th November the second reading was carried by 323 votes to 157. The opposition, however, strongly resisted the passage of the Bill, and the Church Council pressed for concessions as to contracting out far beyond the limits to which the government could go. In the result the Bill was withdrawn and the question left unsettled. The King, who was distinctly disappointed at this unfavourable turn of events, expressed to Mr. Asquith (December 5) his

profound regret at the necessity which has arisen for the withdrawal of the Education Bill, but he quite understands that practically the cabinet had no alternative.

He fears that the outlook for a settlement of the question is a bad one, for it appears to him that neither side can give way in regard to the rock upon which they have now split.

The King will be much interested in hearing, later on, what steps the cabinet propose to take in regard to the introduction of another Bill.

But the King was not destined to see another Education Bill introduced into Parliament, and in the event many years were to pass before the subject was again broached.

IV

In October 1908 the necessity for a few minor changes in the government were called for by the venerable Lord Ripon's resignation of the Privy Seal owing to "age and infirmities." But the story behind Ripon's resignation was not quite so simple Ripon had long been a Roman Catholic and a question now arose on which he and his Protestant colleagues differed. Two months earlier a Roman Catholic Eucharistic Congress on an unprecedentedly solemn scale was held in London, and it was intended to conclude its sittings with a public procession of the

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Holy Sacrament on Sunday, 13th September, attended by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Vannutelli, and an imposing assemblage of Roman Catholic dignitaries. This public adoration of the Host was announced to be "an act of reparation for the Reformation."[1] Protestant societies were at once roused. They held that the procession was illegal under the Catholic Emancipation Act, and that a disturbance of the peace must result from so deliberate a defiance of the law. Public opinion became visibly disturbed. Nothing, however, was done by the government until four days before the date fixed for the procession, and even then nothing might have been done but for the active intervention of the King.

Appeals were made to the King on 8th September by the Protestant Alliance and the Church Association begging him to intervene and stop the illegal procession. The formal reply was made that petitions should be sent to the Home Office, but the King at once telegraphed to the Prime Minister :

As feeling is very excited with regard to meeting of Cardinals, the King suggests you should communicate with Lord Ripon, one of the Vice-Presidents (of the Eucharistic Congress), to urge no breaking of law, and the avoidance of any procession which might meet with hostile reception.

The Prime Minister promptly acted on the King's suggestion and privately asked Lord Ripon to use his influence with the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster to secure the cancellation of the procession. Ripon, though deeply humiliated by this reminder of the survival of Catholic disabilities, and sore with the Home Office at the affront which he felt had been placed upon his Church by its negligence and mismanagement, acceded to the Prime Minister's request, although he disliked being appealed to and was doubtful if Cardinal Bourne would forgo the procession. Meanwhile, letters of protest were pouring in to the King, who was disturbed at receiving no word from Mr. H. Gladstone, the Home Secretary, and complained that he had not received the Church Association's petition. On 11th September at 4 P.M. a telegram was sent to the Prime Minister in cypher :

[1] There had been similar processions on a smaller scale in 1898 and 1901, and, although they were clearly contraventions of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, they had not been interfered with by the authorities.

The King feels very strongly with regard to inability of Home Office to stop procession . . .

At present letters and press indicate public feeling credits the King's sympathy with procession which is exact reverse of fact. Home Secretary informed Church Association matter was receiving King's attention, whereas King's opinion yesterday clearly stated His Majesty hoped procession would not take place as likely to cause breach of peace.

Mr. Asquith promptly replied that he had asked the Home Secretary to secure the publication of legal opinion on the subject, but he pointed out that the Act of 1829 did not authorise the prohibition of the procession, which could only be lawfully prohibited if there were strong grounds for fearing a breach of the peace, of which, however, there was no suggestion. The Home Secretary, however, did not publish legal opinion on the vexed question, nor did he consult the King. The King, not a little angry at Gladstone's silence, telegraphed to the Prime Minister (September 12) that he was surprised

no statement has appeared in press this morning as he had hoped with reference to procession. Present position is extremely unsatisfactory. . . .

Procession is, however, allowed and public opinion inclines to fasten responsibility on the King who is in complete ignorance of reasons for abstaining from interference.

The King thinks the government reasons for no interference should be clearly communicated to press to-day for publication before procession in order to fix responsibility in proper quarter.

From first to last the King has received no communication on the subject from Home Office.

Meanwhile, Lord Ripon was negotiating with Cardinal Bourne, and after a long and painful correspondence the Cardinal Archbishop agreed to eliminate the Host and the vestments from the procession. The procession thus shorn of its brilliance encountered no opposition and there was no disturbance The next day Mr. Gladstone telegraphed to the King that the procession had passed off without any breach of the peace, and received the deserved rebuke :

From an ordinary point of view it appears to the King that an illegal act is illegal, whether its commission involves a breach of the peace or not.

. . . Bearing in mind the extent to which the Reformation

is bound up with the national history, the King cannot wonder that the procession thus publicly announced, with its avowed object, created a grave sensation among English Protestants.

The King has no wish to enter into the controversial aspect of the agitation, but he thinks it should have been foreseen by the Home Secretary and those responsible to him, and that directly the character of the procession was known, its illegality should have been pointed out without a moment's loss of time.

The same result would have been attained, but without the feeling of soreness and disappointment to the Roman Catholic community, which was experienced by them with some reason, on the illegal features of the procession being abandoned at the eleventh hour consequent on official representation.

But the King added a characteristic touch at the end of his letter when he stated that he was "quite complacent" now that the affair had ended satisfactorily.[1]

Lord Ripon, however, warmly resented the interference with Roman Catholic liberties and the revival of disabilities, and his resignation followed. "It would be impossible for me," he wrote to Mr. Asquith (September 14, 1908) "to support or defend the

[1] Earlier in his reign the King had made a decided protest against the accession Declaration as a slight to his Roman Catholic subjects, and rumour at the time was rife with plausible explanations of the King's partiality to Roman Catholicism, but the event narrated above attests the King's firm determination to uphold his coronation oath to maintain the Protestant religion.

Eighteen months later the question was again raised in connection with the consecration of the Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral which was fixed for June 1910. Mr. Winston Churchill, then the Home Secretary, suggested in March that on this occasion the procession should be allowed to circulate about the Cathedral and urged that Roman Catholics would greatly appreciate the concession, but the King was doubtful, and thought he would receive the same petitions and protests as in 1908. He felt that the concession would mean a grave surrender of principle. However, he wrote to Winston Churchill from Biarritz on 19th March:

"The King fully appreciated Mr. Churchill's opinion that the concession is one which will be valued by the Roman Catholic community; but he is bound to respect the prejudices of those who hold contrary views with regard to the procession, and before giving a definite opinion, therefore, the King would like the legal and constitutional aspect of the case to be clearly defined, in order to avoid the repetition of what was an extremely disagreeable period of discord eighteen months ago. . .

"The King wishes full latitude to be given to his Roman Catholic subjects in all their religious questions, but he wishes the law to be maintained, and in this view he feels sure he will be supported by Mr. Churchill, both in opinion and action."

However, on being assured that the procession involved no substantial violation of the law and that the Home Office had no power to prevent the proceedings he withdrew his opposition. As before, the procession passed off without disturbance.

course which has been taken by the government, and especially by the Home Office, with regard to the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, which it was intended to hold in Westminster yesterday afternoon." The government had ignored the design of the procession, which was public property, until the 9th September, and the delay in raising objections seemed to Lord Ripon "to be marked by great discourtesy to some of the highest dignitaries of the Church of which I am a member, and by great want of consideration for the Catholic people of this country, and therefore I can take no responsibility for it, and have no choice but to ask you to lay before the King my resignation of the office of Lord Privy Seal . . "

Four weeks later Lord Ripon's (October 8) resignation of the Privy Seal was officially announced as due to his age and ill-health. He acquiesced in the misrepresentation from an unwillingness to embarrass his colleagues.[1]

Mr. Asquith was now faced with the necessity of reconstructing the cabinet Not only was Lord Ripon's office of Privy Seal to be filled but also that of the Presidency of the Council, which Lord Tweedmouth had resigned a fortnight earlier on account of ill-health. Mr. Asquith at once made his proposals to the King (October 5). He suggested Lord Crewe in Lord Ripon's place as Privy Seal and the veteran Lord Wolverhampton in Lord Tweedmouth's place, thus leaving a vacancy in the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, which Mr. Asquith would leave open until he had seen the King. A week later Mr. Asquith suggested Lord Fitzmaurice (then Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs) for the Duchy, though he would still continue to represent the Foreign Office in the House of Lords; and he reported that Lord Wolverhampton would accept the Presidency of the Council. The King replied that day:

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER—From your letter just received I quite understand that as Lord Wolverhampton is so anxious to take the office of President of the Council you have no other alternative but to recommend him to me for that post, to which I agree, but all the same much regret that he gives up the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster! I also quite agree

[1] Nine months later he died at the age of eighty-two. *Cf.* Lucien Wolff's *Life of Lord Ripon*.

to your recommendation that Lord Fitzmaurice should succeed Lord Wolverhampton, with a seat in the Cabinet, but continuing to represent the Foreign Office in the House of Lords (though no longer Under-Secretary).

Believe me, very sincerely yours, E.R.

V

While the King abstained from examining closely legislative details, and while he continued to regard his ministers' actions as matters for their own discretion, he found little in the ministerial financial proposals to command his personal approval. Especially did Mr. Lloyd George's Budget of 1909, which imposed new burdens on landed and other property, cause him searching of heart. Some indication of his anxiety is contained in the letter which he wrote to Mr. Asquith from Naples on May 1st—two days after Mr. Lloyd George had introduced his Budget. That day the King had received a letter from Mr. Asquith, dated 31st March, in which he pointed out that a deficit of £1,000,000 marked the previous year's returns, and with the proposed increase of £3,000,000 for the Navy and £8,000,000 for Old Age Pensions there was a possibility of a deficit of £12,000,000 for the forthcoming year. In order to meet this the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed increases in license duties, income tax, and estate and legacy duties. The King's reply ran:

The King also desires me to thank you for the report of the Cabinet meeting. His Majesty wishes me to ask you whether in framing the Budget the Cabinet took into consideration the possible (but the King hopes improbable) event of a European War. The income tax, which always has been regarded as a war tax, now stands so high for unearned incomes over a certain amount that any great increase would have a most disastrous effect on land generally, more especially if the war lasted for a considerable time.

For the first time since his accession the King had urged his ministers to take into consideration "the possible event of a European war." Hitherto he had deprecated the thought of war, but the vast increase of German armaments and the aggressive action of Austria in the Balkans had led him to the conclusion that their policy might result in a war, and though keenly

desirous for peace he realised the truth of the old saying, "Si vis pacem para bellum"

The King had a strong dislike of the government's financial proposals and perceived that opinion in the country was divided so that the government's electoral position was far from stable. Moreover, there was considerable difference of opinion even among leading Liberals On 22nd June 1909 Mr. Asquith informed the King that Lord Fitzmaurice, the new Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, had resigned owing to "a very bad state of health." The King appended the comment, "I suppose it is ill-health and not for political reasons that he resigns I shall be curious to learn who the Prime Minister proposes as his successor! E R"

The next day Mr Asquith submitted Mr Herbert Samuel for the vacant post, and pointed out that as he was a Jew, he himself would exercise ecclesiastical patronage. In the same letter he announced the retirement of Mr. T. R. Buchanan, the Under Secretary for India, and a few days later he suggested Sir Norman Lamont, M P. for Buteshire, for the vacant post. Three weeks later, however, he informed the King that Lamont's name was withdrawn, "owing to electoral considerations," and the King commented: "I can quite understand what the electoral considerations are!"

VI

The fears that the Lords would now challenge public opinion more directly than ever by rejecting the Budget roused strong feeling even within the cabinet, and the King felt it his duty to reprove some rancorous expressions of Mr. L. Harcourt, whose guest he had recently been In a speech at Leigh on 15th July 1909 Mr. Harcourt made the statement that

> The black hand of the Peerage, which holds its secret sessions at Lansdowne House, has issued edicts of assassination against too many fair measures desired by the people and passed by overwhelming majorities in the only House in which the people are directly represented.

The King at once protested against the description of the Peers as "assassins," and Harcourt, in an explanation dated 25th July,

urged that "the metaphor may be rough but is not unfair, and the facts he stated are absolutely true." Nevertheless, the King regretted Harcourt's "using such words immediately after he (the King) had been your guest." As of old he deprecated any expression which might create bad feeling in the country, and his sole wish was for a peaceable settlement of what threatened to be one of the greatest crises in British constitutional history.

The cabinet, as Mr. Asquith reported to the King on 8th September, was now occupied with a preliminary discussion of the situation which would arise in the event of the House of Lords' rejecting, or delaying, the Finance Bill, and the Lord Chancellor was requested to prepare as soon as possible, in consultation with the Law Officers, a memorandum on the legal aspects of the case. Mr. Asquith added that if the House of Lords rejected the Budget the cabinet was of the opinion that it "ought to be followed by an acceleration of the register so as to secure at the earliest possible moment an appeal to the country."

Mr. McKenna pointed out to the King on 27th September that the rejection of the measure by the Lords would be a violent breach of the established constitutional practice and would call for an immediate definition and limitation of their powers by statute. No two principles, he urged, were more firmly settled in the constitution than that the House of Commons is alone responsible for the taxation and that it is only by a vote in that House that the life of the government of the day can be terminated. Yet the action of the Lords in rejecting a Finance Bill would amount to a denial of both these principles, and no government could remain in office unless it were guaranteed against similar action by the Lords in future. He pointed out that the rejection of a Finance Bill differed greatly from the rejection of any other Bill, in that unless such a measure were passed every year the administration of the national services could not proceed, and as a Finance Bill must be passed annually, the Lords could force an election in any year they pleased. If the Lords rejected the Bill the additional taxes imposed under it would cease to be levied, and a considerable deficit in the revenue would ensue. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would find himself obliged in consequence to propose a new and more drastic scheme of taxation and once again the Lords would be able to say

that the country had never sanctioned the new Budget. He pointed out that a Finance Bill had never yet been thrown out by the Lords, and that the rejection of the present one would be "the first step in a revolution."

Despite his dislike of the Budget, the King agreed with Mr. McKenna that the Lords in considering its rejection were meditating a tactical error, and he resolved to exert his personal influence to prevent what he judged to be a political disaster. He hoped to exercise the reconciling power which Queen Victoria employed in 1869, in the case of the Irish Church, and again in 1884, in the case of the Franchise Bill, when the two Houses of Parliament were in collision. But the circumstances differed; in neither of the earlier crises was the Commons' control of finance in question Nor was the King's habit of mind so well fitted as his mother's for the persuasive patience essential to success in a difficult arbitration. The Conservative peers felt that the King was in no position, whatever happened, to give their House protection from attack, and that his constitutional outlook would lead him to assent to ministerial advice, which was certainly the correct path for him to follow. Yet early in October 1909 the King invited to Balmoral Lord Cawdor, one of the most strenuous champions of the uncompromising policy of the peers, and asked him to draw up a memorandum on the Budget and its possible rejection by the House of Lords. Lord Cawdor's views were diametrically opposed to those of Mr. McKenna. He urged (October 2) that:

"The object of the second Chamber is that it should secure to the electors of the country the opportunity of exercising their wishes as to important legislative proposals before they become law," and he held that proposals in the Finance Bill made it difficult to justify the passing of such proposals into law without giving the people an opportunity of exercising their views upon them. "For this purpose the House of Lords need not express any view, favourable or unfavourable, to the Budget proposals." The reference of such an important Bill to the electorate seemed to Lord Cawdor to be one of the primary duties of the House of Lords.

The King now had before him two conflicting opinions each honestly given and conscientiously held. The King felt that he could accept neither of them, and with a view to easing the

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tense situation summoned Mr. Asquith to Balmoral with a view to ascertaining if he was well within constitutional lines in holding communications with the opposition leaders at this juncture. Mr. Asquith replied that he thought it would be perfectly correct on a constitutional point of view. Accordingly the King on his return to Buckingham Palace sent for Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Balfour. Although these negotiations were justified only by the emergency, there was no overstepping of the limits of the royal power, and the tenor of the conversations was in each case immediately communicated by the King to the Prime Minister in personal audience. But here again the King's intervention had little effect. The political difficulty caused the King an anxiety and irritation which no matter of domestic policy had hitherto occasioned him. He found no comfort in the action of any of the parties to the strife. The blank refusal of the Conservative leaders to entertain his warnings was unwelcome to his *amour propre*, and his inability to qualify the course of events was a great disappointment to him.

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The Finance Bill finally passed the House of Commons on 5th November by a majority of 379 to 149. On the 16th November 1909 Lord Lansdowne announced that when the Finance Bill came up for second reading on the following Monday he would move: "That this House is not justified in giving its consent to this Bill until it has been submitted to the judgement of the country." Whether the resolution was legitimate from the point of view of constitutional law, or whether it was even in accordance with constitutional usage and practice, was doubtful. On the one hand, Sir Frederick Pollock wrote to the *Spectator* saying that the rejection of the Budget was "the most audacious attempt to subvert the foundations of Parliamentary government since the revolution of 1688"; while at the same time Professor Dicey and Sir William Anson considered the rejection to be perfectly legitimate.

Mr. Asquith now considered the rejection of the Budget certain, and on 17th November wrote to the King: "That the rejection of the existing Bill by the Lords must be followed, if your Majesty approves, by a dissolution of Parliament at the earliest practicable date."

On 24th November he wrote that:

as soon as the rejection of the Bill by the House of Lords is an accomplished fact, he would give notice that he will at once move a declaratory resolution to the effect that the action of the Lords is an invasion of the liberties and privileges of the Commons, and a departure from well-settled constitutional usage. This motion will, of course, be carried by an overwhelming majority probably after a short discussion—and will be the fitting prelude to the prorogation, and subsequent dissolution.

On 30th November Lord Lansdowne's motion, which rejected the Budget, was passed in the House of Lords by 350 votes to 75. The "Backwoodsmen" Peers, who rarely attended the House of Lords, crowded the benches and voted solidly for the rejection. It was now war to the knife between the two Houses. The first victory rested with Mr. Asquith, who scored a tactical point by moving in the Commons on 2nd December, the motion of which he had previously informed the King, "That the action of House of Lords in refusing to pass into law the financial provision made by the House for the service of the year is a breach of the constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the Commons." The motion was carried by 349 to 134 and the next day Parliament was prorogued.

On 15th December the King acting on the Prime Minister's advice dissolved Parliament, for the second time in his reign. The battle was now joined by the two political parties in a bitter electoral campaign, in which the abolition of the Veto of the House of Lords was the principal point at issue. Mr. Lloyd George in a series of violent speeches declared the issue to be the supremacy of the House of Lords, a branch of the Tory organisation, and that he would not remain in a Liberal cabinet for an hour unless the House of Commons could carry bills in a single Parliament with or without the sanction of the Lords. Mr. Winston Churchill, too, was very active in the campaign, but more statesmanlike than his Welsh rival. As Mr. Asquith wrote to Lord Knollys (11/12/09):

I hope you have noted the moderation of tone, and the absence of personalities and bad taste—as well as the conspicuous ability—which have characterised Winston Churchill's campaign in Lancashire.

The King followed the campaign with mixed feelings. He resented the mention of his name in the speeches of some members

of the government and insisted that no suggestion that he was siding with either party was allowable. A further complication was of greater moment. Mr. Lloyd George at the outset of the campaign spoke of "guarantees," and the rumour ran that in the event of the return of the Liberals at the coming election, the guarantees would take the form of a promise to the Liberal ministry on the part of the King to create, in the event of the Lords' continued obduracy, a sufficiency of new peers to give the government a majority in the Upper House. The question of such "guarantees" on the King's part had not been raised by the Prime Minister in his intercourse with the King. It was, however, freely discussed by the King's friends and unofficial advisers, and it was strongly urged on him that it lay within his constitutional rights to refuse ministerial advice for the swamping of the House of Lords by Liberal nominees. It was pointed out by Lord Esher that there was no urgency in the matter, inasmuch as Lord Lansdowne had pledged the House of Lords to pass the Budget, if it had the approval of the country. He justly argued that there was no precedent for asking the sovereign to use his prerogative to pass through the House of Lords a measure which had not even obtained the assent of the House of Commons; and that although there might be some justification for asking him to use his prerogative to pass a Bill which had already received the overwhelming assent of the House of Commons, there was absolutely none for asking him to promise to use it for the purpose of ultimately passing a Bill which neither House had yet seen.

But Mr. Asquith now roundly declared at the Albert Hall on 10th December to an audience of 10,000 men that the Liberal government would vindicate the principles of representative government, and that "we shall not assume office and shall not hold office unless we can secure the safeguards which experience has shown to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress."

There was no uncertainty as to what Mr. Asquith meant by the "safeguards" he required, though no communication had been made by him to the King on the subject. Early in December the cabinet had discussed whether instead of attempting to alter by statute the relations between the two Houses of Parliament, they should advise the King to place permanently in the hands of

the Prime Minister of the day the royal prerogative of creating peers. The only alternative according to their view was a definite promise from the sovereign to create a sufficient number of peers to pass the measure.[1] The former would have been "an abdication by the sovereign of his prerogative, not only on his own behalf, but on that of his successor." And the second, that the King should create an enormous number of peers to pass a Bill through the House of Lords would have involved a decision by the King, which the King, who held the view that the constitutional tangle ought to be unravelled without undue reference to his name or to his prerogatives, was not eager to face.

[1] There was only one English precedent for the creation of peers for the purpose of obtaining a majority in the House of Lords when Queen Anne created 12—a small creation compared with that which was under discussion—though on the other hand there was an earlier and perhaps more dangerous precedent, that of 1649, for the abolition of the Lords by the Commons The case of 1832 was frequently quoted as a precedent, but no peers were then created, and it was by no means certain that King William IV would, in the last resort, have made them.

CHAPTER XXIX

ANGLO-GERMAN RELATIONS, 1909

I

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By far the gravest problem which confronted the King and his ministers during this period was the ever-growing Anglo-German rivalry in commercial and sea power, and it was with a view to improving Anglo-German relations that the King, late in 1908, suggested to the Kaiser that he should pay a state visit to Berlin. The King had noted with welcome surprise that during the Bosnian crisis the Kaiser and his ministers had been actuated by a sincere desire to keep the peace of the world, and he desired to mark his approval of his nephew's attitude by a visit to Germany. The Kaiser was enthusiastic on learning of the King's intention, and was anxious to know the date well beforehand so as to be able to make adequate preparations. On 1st January 1909 the King telegraphed to the Kaiser:

> In again expressing my very best wishes for a happy New Year, may we hope that it will suit you for us to pay you our promised visit in the second week of February?

The reply came next day:

> Your kind telegram, announcing your intended visit in company with dear Aunt, has given Victoria and me greatest pleasure. The date named by you suits us in every respect. We look forward to your visit, which will be received with unmingled satisfaction by the whole German nation as a means to promote and strengthen peace and goodwill between the nations.

On 8th January the Kaiser wrote to the Tsar:

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We are quite as anxious as you to improve our relations with England. I am looking forward to the visit Uncle Bertie is going to pay me next month in Berlin, not only because I am gratified to have him and Aunt Alix over here, but also because I expect the visit to have useful results for the Peace of the World. . . .[1]

The programme was thoroughly discussed early in January, and was soon agreed upon, though when the King heard from Goschen that Eulenburg had suggested that he should stop before the Rathaus and say a few words to the Berlin municipal authorities, he commented, "That is what I feared and wanted to avoid," but he eventually agreed to the suggestion, and the reception outside the Rathaus was one of the features of the visit.

On the 8th February 1909 the King and Queen left London for Berlin, arriving next day. There was a large suite, including Lord Crewe (Secretary of State for the Colonies, as Minister in Attendance), Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell and Sir Charles Hardinge. The visit coincided with a welcome calm in international affairs. On the day of the arrival of the King in Berlin, France and Germany reached a final agreement in regard to Morocco, by which Germany at length recognised the special political interests of France in that disturbed country, whilst at the same time securing her own commercial rights.[2]

The King on his arrival at Berlin on 9th February was met by the Kaiser and Kaiserin, and there was a "great deal of embracing between the royalties."[3] The state entry into Berlin was a magnificent sight. The sun shone intermittently and lit up the curving line of bayonets of the twenty thousand stalwart cavalry and infantry of the Guard who lined the route as the King and the Kaiser proceeded from the station to the Palace.

That evening there was a state banquet of about two hundred guests in the banqueting hall of the royal Castle, remarkable for its gilded ceiling and beautiful chandeliers. The King and

[1] *Willy-Nicky Letters*, p. 242.

[2] The dispute over the incident at Casablanca of the previous year was referred to the Hague Court of Arbitration, which decided in France's favour (May 22). In effect, the convention was a specific confirmation of the Act of Algeciras and seemed to remove an ugly rock of stumbling on the road to universal peace. See pp. 656-7 *supra*.

[3] Lord Grenfell's *Memoirs*, p. 183.

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the Kaiser sat at the centre of the high table, with the Kaiserin on their left and Queen Alexandra on their right. The Kaiser, speaking in English, read the usual complimentary welcome, and the King, breaking away from his usual habit of extempore speech-making, read the diplomatic reply. The King was very friendly and courteous to all who met him, but, as many observers remarked, he did not appear to be in very good health; he looked tired, and coughed constantly. It was just that period of the year when his bronchial affection became most troublesome. Among the guests whom the King met after dinner was Madame de Hegermann Lindencrone, the American wife of the Danish Minister to Berlin, whom the King had only met once before: but his memory was not at fault. He asked her if she remembered a song she used to sing with something about "I mean the daughter." "Yes, Your Majesty," she replied, "the song was 'I know a lady, a Mrs. Brady.' Fancy Your Majesty remembering all these years. It was when Your Majesty came to Sommerberg to play tennis with Paul Hatzfeldt." "A long time ago," replied the King, "I was stopping with the King and Queen of Denmark at Wiesbaden. I remember all so well. Poor Hatzfeldt! I remember what Bismarck said of him. Was he not the best horse in his stable?" and he turned smilingly to greet another guest.[1]

The programme arranged for the three days' state visit of the King and Queen to the German Emperor and Empress at Berlin was by no means a light one. In addition to the family luncheon at the Castle, and the gala dinner at the Palace, there was a reception by the civic authorities at the Brandenburg Gate, a visit to the Rathaus, luncheon at the British Embassy, a Court Ball at the Castle on Wednesday; a motor drive to Potsdam and a visit to the Mausoleum there, luncheon with the 1st Prussian Dragoon Guards, a family dinner with the Crown Prince, and a gala performance at the Opera on Thursday; sight-seeing in the city, and luncheon at the Castle on Friday.

Special interest attached to the visit to the Rathaus, for this was an innovation, it having been usual in the past for the hospitality of the civic authorities to end with the reception of royal visitors on their arrival. At the Rathaus the King was

[1] L. de Hegermann Lindencrone's *The Sunny Side of Diplomatic Life*, p. 326 *seq.*

received by the Burgomaster, Herr Kirschner, who made a short speech expressing the satisfaction of the municipality at His Majesty's visit to Berlin, and asked the King to receive a cup of German wine from the city of Berlin out of the hands of a citizen's daughter. The King then drank from a golden goblet filled with Rhine wine, which Herr Kirschner's little daughter presented to him, and, speaking in clear tones in German, expressed his appreciation of the splendid reception accorded him, and his desire that the relations of the English and German peoples should always be the best. He then drank to the townspeople assembled in the galleries, and finished by a charming speech to the pretty little girl who had presented the goblet to him. This last touch brought down the house. It was a triumph of tact, eloquence, and courtesy, and the King was enthusiastically cheered.[1] In the gallery the King noticed an old friend, the medical attendant of his sister, the late Empress Frederick, and he desired that he might be fetched down as he wished to speak to him. These two incidents had a remarkable effect on Berlin opinion. The reception in the streets had been respectful but cold. Now it was changed to enthusiastic demonstrations. The King's delightful actions and cordial speech had no doubt caused this change, "which was not at all appreciated by von Bulow and the All Highest."[2]

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At the luncheon offered to the diplomatic body at the British Embassy, the King was especially happy in his kindly words to the representatives of different countries as they were presented to him. To the American Ambassador he expressed his deep interest in the work of the Hague Conference, with the details of which he proved to be unexpectedly familiar.

The gala performance at the Opera was responsible for an amusing event in which the King provided the Emperor with a good laugh. The spectacular play "Sardanapalus," organised by the Kaiser, was given. Strictly speaking it could hardly be classed with opera at all, being rather a series of splendid pictures interspersed with songs. The last scene of all was a very realistic and vivid representation of the funeral pyre of Sardanapalus, which, beginning with little licking tongues of flame, soon spreads to a wide and vivid blaze, in which Sardanapalus and all his household perish. At the moment before the curtain finally descended the

[1] Lord Grenfell's *Memoirs*, p. 185. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 185-6.

whole stage had the appearance of a glowing furnace threaded with leaping flames and rolling billows of smoke. King Edward, being very tired with his hard day's work in Berlin, had indulged in a short nap during the scene, and woke to consciousness at the moment of most intense conflagration. For a few startled moments he was much alarmed, thinking that the fire was real, and wondering why the firemen stationed at the wings had not yet become active. With some difficulty the Empress managed to convince him that there was no danger.[1]

Throughout the visit the King was suffering from a cold and from fatigue. He spoke little, and nothing about politics, either to his nephew or to the Chancellor. After the luncheon at the British Embassy he was seized with a terrible fit of coughing, which ended in a sort of collapse that caused immense alarm. Physicians were hastily summoned, and the room was cleared, but the attack quickly passed, and the King, with characteristic disregard, lighted another large cigar and remained for some time talking to the Ambassador and his guests. At the state ball in the evening, however, he sat very quietly observing the dancers and did not move about.

The impression he made on a shrewd German observer during this visit is interesting. Count Zedlitz Trützschler, the Controller of the Kaiser's Household, records that

> the King of England is so stout that he completely loses his breath when he has to climb upstairs, and has to save himself in many ways. The Emperor told us that at the first family dinner he fell asleep. At the lunch at the British Embassy he was indisposed for a few minutes, but he eats, drinks, and smokes enormously. He has an amiable, pleasant manner and looks very shrewd. But I fancy that the part he plays in the affairs of his country is smaller than we have imagined. He allows a great deal of independence to the persons who have been carefully chosen for their duties, and only takes a hand when there is something of special importance to call for his intervention, and then with his age and experience and thorough knowledge of the world he acts very adroitly. I can imagine that a sly and amiable smile steals over his face, when he thinks how the whole world looks upon him as the guiding spirit of all the solid and brilliant achievements of British diplomacy.[2]

[1] Anne Topham's *Memoirs of the Kaiser's Court*, p. 87.
[2] *Twelve Years at the German Court*, pp 258-9.

Although the King's visit made a most favourable impression, it did little to alleviate the tension caused by the growing Anglo-German naval rivalry. The King's presence in Berlin reinforced at the time the pacific influences, but there was an ominous murmur that the King had postponed till the ninth year of his reign a visit to the Kaiser's capital. Paris, Lisbon, Rome, Vienna, and the Scandinavian capitals had all been treated better than Berlin, and there were elements in the German capital who were not disposed to forgive the fancied slight. There was perhaps some ground for the inauspicious hints in the German press that the King's visit was long overdue, though such critics overlooked the fact that the King and the Kaiser had met much more frequently than any other two rulers of Great Powers, and that the King had offered to come to Berlin in 1904, only to be brusquely put off by the Kaiser. Other critics pointed out that the visit coincided with an increase of the British Naval Budget, with the strengthening of the British fleet in the North Sea, and the organisation of a Territorial Army beyond the need of home defence. The passionate advocates of a stronger German navy declined to slacken their agitation, and the gleams of hope which the Berlin visit called into being were soon to fade.

Socially, the visit of the British sovereigns, made in winter, and at considerable inconvenience, was a pleasant event; but, politically, it may be doubted if it was of great value. The fact that the King and the Kaiser were for a few days in each other's presence, sat at the same table, and made pleasant ceremonial speeches did not produce the conviction that the visit had accomplished any lasting good.

II

One of the King's first public duties when he returned to England was the state opening of Parliament on 16th February. The King's speech from the throne had been drafted at the cabinet meeting on 9th February, and opened with an emphatic reference to the cordial reception at Berlin and the effect of an Anglo-German friendship which was expected to result from it.

Parliamentary proceedings were marked by exceptional calm during the first month of the session, but the issue on 13th March of the proposed Naval Estimates, together with the explanatory

statement, heralded a storm which brought into a fresh prominence the naval rivalry between England and Germany. An increase of nearly £3,000,000 was proposed, and much of this was allocated to beginning work on four Dreadnoughts.

There had previously been some division in the cabinet as to the immediate steps to be taken in order to meet Germany's naval activity. Eventually, in spite of the pacific attitude of Winston Churchill and Lloyd George, the government decided on a big building programme for 1909–10 unless there was definite assurance from the German government that they were slackening their programme. Three months earlier, 19th December 1908, Mr. Asquith had reported to the King that there would be a net increase of £2,000,000 in the Naval Estimates for 1909–10, and he pointed out that the marked acceleration in the German rate of construction had led the Admiralty to propose six instead of four Dreadnoughts for next year. Finally, he added that Count Metternich had hinted to Sir Edward Grey that in view of financial and other considerations the German naval programme might be modified.

The King's comment (December 20, 1908) ran :

> One can see that the naval programme caused great discussion. I don't think Metternich's information to Grey is of the slightest value, as the British naval attaché at Berlin ought to be asked to give us the exact number of ships which the German government is building. As the increase of naval expenditure is so great I can well understand that there was considerable difference of opinion between members of the cabinet. As long as Germany persists in her present programme of shipbuilding we have no alternative but to build double.

Again, on 2nd February 1909, Mr. Asquith reported that there were differences in the cabinet over the Navy Estimates. There was animated discussion as to whether four or six Dreadnoughts should be built. For ten days the King heard nothing further from the Prime Minister regarding naval estimates, and his old suspicion that there was undue reticence regarding matters of which he ought to be informed crossed his mind, and he could not forbear from letting the Prime Minister know that he felt he was being " kept in the dark." The answer, however, was reassuring. There had been no further discussion of Navy Estimates in spite of " torrents of gossip in the press." Mr. Asquith added grimly

that he would not be surprised if there were a crisis on the subject in the cabinet. That day (February 15) the cabinet met and Mr. Asquith reported that Churchill, Harcourt, and Morley were for four Dreadnoughts, while Grey, Runciman, Crewe, and Buxton were for six at once, with two additions to be made later if necessary. Mr. Asquith pointed out that Germany had now thirteen Dreadnoughts on stocks, four only of which were in commission, against our twelve; but if the old programme had been kept to, Germany would have but ten on stocks. If four more were sanctioned by our naval estimates, then we should have sixteen by April 1912, and Germany thirteen. But if Germany hurried on and had seventeen Dreadnoughts ready for sea by March 1911, "then we must hurry on under powers Parliament is giving and reach twenty." "It is difficult to see how a two-Power standard could be maintained if Germany lays down four battleships per annum and we also lay down four."

On 6th March Lord Knollys reported to the King, who was at Biarritz, that Churchill and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom the King had seen a little previously, were now willing that there should be *six* Dreadnoughts, but the Admiralty had now made the demand that there should be *eight* instead of six, the number they originally proposed. Four days later he wrote that

> the last phase in the "Dreadnought" question is that eight are to be laid down in July next and that all are to be completed by the spring of 1912. Four of these will be included in the Estimates for the present year (1909–10) and the other four in next year's estimates. . . .
>
> The question as to how many should be laid down next year has been left open. I believe Sir E. Grey has made up his mind to retire if the programme, as at present arranged, is not carried out, but the cabinet seems to alter their decision every week.

The newspapers now announced that Mr. McKenna, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was suffering from a "chill," but the real truth of the matter was that he wanted to resign McKenna's position had indeed been difficult. He had first asked for six Dreadnoughts and then for eight, while both Lloyd George and Winston Churchill threatened to resign if more than four were sanctioned.

On 16th March Mr. McKenna introduced the Navy Estimates

to a crowded house. "For arithmetical purposes" he compared the progress of shipbuilding in Germany with that in England. He laid stress on the difficulty of learning the precise rate of German production, which had increased immensely within the last two years, and made it clear that the race between England and Germany in the production of Dreadnoughts was ominously close. Mr. Balfour declared the situation to be alarming, and showed that it was quite possible, unless the government revised its programme, that by April 1912 Germany might possess twenty-one big battleships to our twenty. The Prime Minister did not deny the seriousness of the position, but declared that the government were fully conscious of its responsibilities for national security, and would not hesitate to make needful additions to "this horrible, devastating and sterilising expenditure."

But in spite of the increased expenditure there was a widespread feeling that the government were not doing enough, and the opposition in Parliament resulted in a vote of censure which was moved by Mr. Arthur (afterwards Viscount) Lee on 29th March. The resolution stated that the policy of the government respecting the immediate provision of battleships of the newest type did not secure the safety of the Empire. Sir E. Grey on behalf of the government, whilst admitting the gravity of the crisis expressed doubt as to whether the four extra Dreadnoughts would be at once required. He denied that an acceleration of Germany's programme was likely; he deplored the growth of armaments, but, although the jealousy was obvious, there were many signs of amity in Anglo-German relations, notably the Franco-German agreement about Morocco and the exchange of visits between the Kaiser and the King. Mr. Balfour wound up the debate with an emphatic declaration that the government were relying on too small a margin of superiority over the German fleet, but Mr. Arthur Lee's resolution was lost by 353 to 135.

The King, as he wrote to Fisher on 22nd March, was naturally

> very much disturbed at the revelations which have been made during the Naval debate, and they disclose a state of things which is anything but satisfactory.
>
> If the Naval Intelligence Branch knew the Germans to be building, 18 months ago, battleships in excess of the numbers

which were given by the German Government as under construction, and *reported* it, in justice to them it should come out.

If, however, they only guessed or made deductions from the flotation of the Krupp loan, it is a pity they did not carry their investigation further, and find out more definitely what was going on.

The King is quite positive that you did not tell him, 18 months ago (when you told Lord Tweedmouth), of the German increase in shipbuilding and is much annoyed, because he was naturally quite unaware of the fact when he was at Berlin last month, and was in ignorance of what would have been most important and useful to him to know.

The King sincerely hopes the eight Dreadnoughts will be forthcoming, but at present there doesn't seem to be any positive assurance that they are a certainty.

In a covering letter Sir Arthur Davidson wrote to Fisher that

the King is very disturbed and angry about this Naval debate, and also that in your letter you said you warned Lord Tweedmouth 18 months ago, and you did not tell the King at the same time.

The King wants to find out *who* it is who is to blame for letting Germany get ahead of us. Whether it is the Naval Intelligence who didn't know, or didn't go sufficiently into details to impress the facts on the cabinet, or whether it's the cabinet who all along knew the facts and ignored them.

Fisher in reply (March 24) bluntly accused Metternich of lying when he said that Germany would have only thirteen Dreadnoughts by April 1912 (Balfour had predicted there would be twenty-one), and that day, on meeting Metternich, he tackled him with the equivocation. But Metternich stuck to his guns, which led Fisher to retort, "How all this care then would vanish, Ambassador, if you would let our Naval Attaché go and count them." "That is impossible!" replied Metternich. "Other governments would also want to—*besides, something would be seen which we wish to keep secret*!" Fisher's not unnatural inference was that they were building much bigger ships "than they say they are," and he added, "we are pushing on with all the arrangements for the *eight* Dreadnoughts, so no time will be lost."

The King accepted the explanation, but Fisher, who justly resented the inference that the Sea Lords had been "caught

napping," pointed out that as early as December 1907 the Sea Lords had presented a memorandum to Mr. McKenna, in which they stressed their anxiety about the possibility of accelerated German shipbuilding. He again reiterated his opinion that "however ambiguous the Prime Minister is, we shall have *eight* Dreadnoughts alright." A cartoon from the *Westminster Gazette* concluded his budget. The King added the autograph comment:

> This is quite satisfactory, and I have kept the *Westminster Gazette* cartoon which is *most* amusing. E.R.

III

Strenuous endeavours were now being made by Bülow and Grey to come to some sort of a naval understanding, but the Kaiser and Tirpitz proved to be insurmountable obstacles to any such settlement. When, on 3rd November 1909, Sir Charles Hardinge sent Bülow's proposals to the King, the King minuted: "It is all very interesting, no doubt, but I have reason to believe that nothing will come of the German propositions." The King was right. Germany was too intent on her Gargantuan naval programme to listen to any suggestion of modification. The aspiration to turn Germany into a great naval power had caught the imagination of the Kaiser and his bellicose advisers. Germany required a fleet to guard her shores and to protect her communications with her colonies, but for her naval aspirations to soar above these limits and impetuously to invoke naval rivalry with England was to jeopardise the peace of the world. There were good grounds for Germany to maintain her army at full strength and efficiency. With her boundaries on both the east and the west exposed to the rooted enmity of military powers like France and Russia, it was clearly prudent for Germany to keep a double-edged sword keenly sharpened to meet twofold emergencies. But it was obviously beyond her power to create a naval arm on English models at the same time as she sustained in full the burden of her military prestige and needs. When the Kaiser and his advisers blindly invited a trial of both her military and naval strength, Germany failed to meet the tests and paid the penalty of her misguidance.

Though Admiral Tirpitz and other advisers share the Kaiser's

responsibility for the ruin due to Germany's naval obsession, on the Kaiser's shoulders lies the main burden of the disaster. From youth his relations with the English royal family had given him every opportunity of studying England's naval strength at close quarters, and his studies had imbued him with a jealousy which he sedulously propagated among his ministers and his people. As a young officer of the Hussars he first voiced the fatal cry among his comrades, "Germany's future lies on the water," and in the years that followed he strained his authority so as to make that provocative deliverance a national motto.

CHAPTER XXX

HOME AFFAIRS, 1909

I

THE King's sudden attack of acute breathlessness while in Berlin had greatly worried his medical advisers. For the last four years the King's health had been a steadily growing source of apprehension for them. Prior to 1905 their task had been a comparatively easy one—though the King frequently suffered from sore throat, due to gouty diathesis and excessive smoking, and more rarely from laryngeal and bronchial catarrh. It was noteworthy that the King when he was ill would dutifully obey his physician's commands, but once he felt well again, he could not be persuaded to follow a definite regime for more than two or three days.

The King's first serious attack of bronchial catarrh had been in February 1905, and a week of great anxiety followed. The King lost strength and became depressed and apathetic, and Sir Felix Semon and Sir Francis Laking were considering the advisability of seeking further medical aid when suddenly, within one night, so great a change for the better occurred that they had great difficulty in restraining the patient from dining on the following night with one of his friends. Recovery was rapid, but the attack taught the King's physicians that their patient's power of resistance could be quickly exhausted. The King, however, was delighted at his regained health and made Sir Felix Semon a K.C.V.O.

The next attack, a more serious one, occurred in the following February. Sir Felix Semon thought that the attacks were due to residence in London in January and February, and begged the King to avoid the fogs of town at that period. The King

would not listen to remonstrance, maintaining that he must open Parliament in person, but he permitted Semon to ask the Prime Minister to hurry on opening of Parliament so that he might leave earlier for Southern France—a request that was readily acceded to.

In the February of 1907 both Semon and Laking were hurriedly summoned to Buckingham Palace for another attack of bronchitis, and which was much more severe than those of 1905 and 1906. The King was depressed and lethargic—harbouring the gloomiest thoughts and more and more frequently entertaining the idea of abdication, from which he was dissuaded only with the greatest difficulty. His strength ebbed rapidly, he spent sleepless nights, and soon lost that intense interest in life which was perhaps his most dominant characteristic. On 16th February the symptoms were much worse. His physicians were anxious and considered bringing others into consultation. But the next night the King slept well and was better in the morning. One week later he seemed quite right again. The King's physicians were not unnaturally worried over this third repetition of bronchitis in three years and drew up a state paper giving full particulars of the King's condition, which they handed to Lord Knollys (February 23, 1907). These attacks, they pointed out, were rarely accompanied by any rise in temperature but generally were extremely obstinate. Moreover, by their long duration, by their causing confinement to the house, by their interference with sleep resulting from the nocturnal attacks of coughing, and by their generally depressing effect, they usually considerably reduced for a time the King's strength. In a man of his age and stout build there was, of course, always the apprehension that in one of these coughing attacks some important blood-vessel might give way, and this anxiety was now increased by the fact that a tendency to hæmorrhage was manifest.

"From the above description," they added, "it is obvious that His Majesty's health, even when it appears excellent to the world at large, unfortunately always is in a somewhat precarious state, and that, whilst it must be devoutly hoped that his extraordinary vitality and the comparatively very slow progress of all the processes we have mentioned may presage many more useful years of this most precious life, it cannot be gainsaid that either a more rapid progress of any of the degenerative changes now at

work or an acute complication of any kind may bring about, apparently suddenly, very serious results."

There was some dispute between the King's advisers as to what action should be taken on the report, and the divergence of opinion eventually resulted in Sir John Bradford being called into consultation.

The following January, however, there was yet another bronchial attack, and on 30th January Sir Felix Semon was hurriedly summoned to attend the King. The King was in perfect despair. "Really, it is too bad," he said; "there is the attack again, although I have taken the greatest care of myself." The attack, however, was slight, and the King's dejection (seriously accentuated through the assassination of the King of Portugal which had just occurred) made him yield easily to medical orders, and he was soon cured. When the King left for Biarritz shortly after he shook hands with Semon and said, "Thank you for having cured me so quickly this time." These were the last words Semon heard from the King. A little later he was replaced by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Milsom Rees, who in turn, after a year's service, was succeeded by Sir Sinclair Thomson. In the following January Sir Felix Semon offered his resignation to the King, and received the reply from Lord Knollys (January 28):

I have informed the King of your intention to retire from practice on the 30th June next.

He desires me to thank you for acquainting him with your purpose, and to say he feels sure you will be a great loss to the profession and to the public and your patients. In a matter of this sort, however, he thinks you must best know what you ought to do not only in regard to yourself, but to Lady Semon and your family.

His Majesty directs me to say he certainly hopes you will remain one of his Physicians Extraordinary so that you will still be a member of his Household, and also that you will continue your connection with his Sanatorium at Midhurst.

Sir Felix acceded to the King's wish and continued as Physician Extraordinary until end of reign.

The deterioration in the King's health from 1908 onwards had its effect on his character, slight it is true, but none the less noticeable. The affable bonhomie that was his most character-

istic trait as Prince of Wales was still there, but it would occasionally be checked by periods of the deepest gloom and melancholy. His father, the Prince Consort, had no great tenacity of life, and the King, although so full of zest and virility when well, had his father's almost fatalistic depression when ill. The burdens of a crowned head are great, but those burdens, combined with the incessant searchlight of publicity and the necessity to look and be charming on all occasions, become insupportable when to them is added the strain of an enfeebled constitution. Cabinet ministers under similar circumstances can and do resign, the leaders of all other forms of national activity can lay down their tasks, but for King Edward this was impossible. True, he sometimes thought of abdication, but soon afterwards, state papers, letters from friends abroad, would bring his attention to some urgent and pressing problem of foreign affairs, and again he would lift up his head and work as strenuously as of old to preserve the peace of Europe and the strength and integrity of his beloved country.

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II

By the end of February 1909 the precarious state of the King's health again rendered a sojourn in sunnier climes imperative, and on 5th March the King left England for a two months' tour abroad. The King's first destination after a call at Paris was Biarritz, where once again he established himself at the Hotel du Palais. The King's love for the enchanted city on the Basque coast with its tamarisk-fringed rocks, with its sun, bright colour, and kaleidoscopic life, had grown with each succeeding stay. But his love for the happy seaside place had not blinded him to one of its drawbacks, the mundane question of drainage, and in the previous November he had directed Sir Arthur Davidson to ask Sir F. Bertie to see M. Clemenceau on the subject. "The King," Sir Arthur Davidson wrote on 17th November, "knows how very anxious and considerate he (M. Clemenceau) is about all the questions for his personal comfort and convenience, and this involves a still more important question of health. The King likes Biarritz so much that he would be very sorry to be obliged to forgo his visit there, but both this year and last year the smells and effects of defective draining was so much in evidence that

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the question of change had to be thought of." M. Clemenceau proved active in the matter and the King was glad to notice a decided improvement.

As on former occasions the King made a trip over to San Sebastian to see the King of Spain, with whom his cordial relations had undergone no diminution.[1] But the King was less active than of yore and his health gave his attendant physician, Sir James Reid, much anxiety.

From Biarritz the King proceeded to Malta, where he was annoyed to learn that the Mediterranean squadron, which should have been at Malta, had suddenly been ordered to Lemnos.

"The King," Major Frederick Ponsonby wrote to the Prime Minister on 20th April 1909, "is much displeased that he should not even have been informed of the dispatch of the Mediterranean Squadron and that the first news of this should have reached him from Malta, where he goes to-morrow.

"The King would wish you to impress on the First Lord of the Admiralty that it is his duty to keep His Majesty informed of such movements, to say nothing of common courtesy, when His Majesty happens to be in the Mediterranean with the intention of seeing the squadron at Malta."

To this stricture Mr. McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, replied at length, on the 21st April, urging that he "was not informed that your Majesty proposed to visit Malta during the present cruise, but he learnt from messages recently received from Admiral Sir Assheton Curzon-Howe of your Majesty's probable intention without being made aware of the date." The Admiralty had received on Monday 19th April a written request from the Foreign Office for the immediate despatch of three ships to Lemnos owing to representations made by Sir G. Lowther as to the condition of Macedonia, and the only ships available were those at Malta.

The dispatch of three additional ships, therefore, would so deplete Malta of ships that there would be no squadron left to receive your Majesty in the event of your Majesty visiting the island in their absence. The matter being urgent, Mr. McKenna approved of orders being at once telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief at Malta to comply with the Foreign Office request, and

[1] In July the King of Spain was delighted to receive a letter from the King inviting him to Cowes for a "private visit," which should include a naval review.

at the same time instructed the Commander-in-Chief to keep your Majesty informed of all movements of your Majesty's ships under his command

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Mr. McKenna ventures to submit to your Majesty that it was impossible for him to send to your Majesty an earlier intimation of the absence of the squadron from Malta at a time when your Majesty was to visit the island.

The reply to this lengthy epistle, written by Major Frederick Ponsonby on 24th April, gave the King's views with much explicitness :

His Majesty wishes me to make it clear that he quite understands that you had no alternative but to send the ships asked for by the Foreign Office at once to Lemnos.

Since, however, you knew that His Majesty was cruising in the Mediterranean, and since you had reason to believe that he contemplated visiting Malta, the King thinks that you should have telegraphed direct to him through whatever channel you found most convenient, and explained the matter to him personally.

As it was, the King sent certain instructions with regard to his reception by the Commander-in-Chief at Malta, and then learnt in reply that the Fleet was sailing the day before he intended to arrive. His Majesty was naturally very angry at not being even informed, more especially as it had an unfortunate effect in Malta, where it appears to have been known that the Fleet had been ordered away by you a few hours before His Majesty's arrival without the King knowing anything of the matter.

The King desires me to add that he feels sure you will understand that on a cruise like this any sort of cut-and-dried programme is tiresome. The whole point of yachting is to be able to go where you like and when you like. Therefore no sort of report to the Admiralty of his Majesty's intentions is made.

The Officer commanding the Yacht had instructions only to report his arrival at different ports, and not to touch on future plans.

The King ascertained that the arrival of the yacht at Girgenti had been duly reported to the Admiralty, so that there would have been no difficulty in your telegraphing direct to the King.

There the matter closed.

From Malta the King went on to Baiae, where he met the King and Queen of Italy on 29th April. The visit was not invested with any political significance, though it served to emphasise the cordiality of Anglo-Italian relations.

III

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On his return to England early in May many people noticed that the King seemed but little improved in health. His pallor was noticeable, and to those who had not seen him for a few months he seemed to have aged excessively in the course of the year. Nevertheless, he at once embarked upon his customary round of official dinners, ministerial interviews, laying foundation stones, receiving distinguished visitors in audience, and other varied public activities that took up such a great part of his day.

The King's visit to Reval in the previous year was now to be returned by the Tsar, and it was finally arranged that after a visit to the French President at Cherbourg on 31st July he should meet the King at Cowes on 2nd August. Again the hostility of Radical and Labour members to an official meeting between the King and the Tsar was made manifest. On 25th June the Labour party issued a declaration that King Edward's projected reception of the Tsar was an insult to the good name of the nation, especially when "his personal approval of the criminal agents had been placed beyond question," and that the Reval meeting of 1908 had made the Russian domestic situation worse than before.

A counter-current was set up by visits of members of the Russian Duma and Council to England on the invitation of persons of distinction, including the two Archbishops, the President of the Royal Society, the Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, etc. The Russian party included President Homiakoff, and representatives of all parties except the Socialists and extreme reactionaries. They arrived in London on 20th June, and lunched at the House of Commons 22nd June, when the Prime Minister welcomed them as colleagues and spoke of their visit as confirming the friendship between the peoples. The King received them on 25th June, declaring he had followed proceedings of Duma with deepest interest. On 29th June President Homiakoff condemned the Labour manifesto as contrasting offensively the Tsar and the Duma party as representing Russian people. Four weeks later the matter came before the House of Commons when the Foreign Office vote was discussed on 22nd July. Mr. Arthur Henderson protested vigorously against the public reception of the Tsar, urging that

it should be private, and he was supported by Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Dillon, the Nationalist M.P. Sir Edward Grey replied that it was a grave offence to criticise the internal administration of foreign countries, and he urged that efforts were being made to establish constitutional government in Russia. The Tsar was the head of a great state with whom England desired to be on friendly terms. Politely, but firmly, Sir Edward rebuked those who sought to stir up ill-feeling between England and Russia. The King, who was hardly conscious of the deep-seated feeling which the alleged tyrannies of the Russian government had excited in many quarters in England, was so pleased with Sir Edward Grey's speech that he conveyed through Lord Knollys his entire approval. But on 2nd August, the day of the Tsar's arrival, there appeared in the press an influentially signed letter to the Foreign Secretary protesting against the official welcome of the Tsar. The letter was signed not only by seventy Liberal and Labour M.P.'s, but also by three peers, including Lord Courtney, the Bishops of Hereford and Birmingham, and many Free Church ministers. The main effect of the letter, however, as Isvolsky remarked, was to emphasise the popular welcome to the Tsar.

Three days before the Tsar's visit there had been a review of the fleet in the Solent, which exhibited British naval strength. Here had been gathered twenty-four battleships, sixteen armoured cruisers, forty-eight destroyers, and well over fifty other vessels of war. Three of the largest vessels were now detailed to escort the Tsar on the Imperial yacht *Standart* from Cherbourg to the Solent, where they met the *Victoria and Albert* with the King on board. Later, the royal yacht with the Imperial party aboard, steamed through the lines of the British fleet, the Tsar saluting each ship, while the crews cheered and the band played the Russian National Anthem. In the evening the Imperial party were entertained aboard the *Victoria and Albert* in Cowes roads, the two yachts lying side by side. The speeches were markedly cordial. The King described the fleet as designed for the protection of the British coasts and commerce, and, above all, for upholding the interests of peace. He referred with pleasure to the visit of members of the Duma, and hoped that what they saw would increase the good feeling already existing between Great Britain and Russia. The King's reference to the visit of the Duma

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delegates greatly delighted Isvolsky. The Tsar, in reply, hoped that the friendly welcome given to the Duma and the Russian squadron that had visited England in the previous March would indicate the growth of a cordial relation between the two countries, founded on common interest and mutual esteem. The same note was struck by the Tsar's replies to the addresses presented him by the Corporation of the City of London and by the London and Liverpool Chambers of Commerce.

The Emperor was very cheerful and pleasant, but the Empress was nervous and sad. The unfortunate little Tsarevitch was with them, a thoroughly jolly little boy, who, however, would not play with King Edward when he made advances. A great deal of friendly and amused good feeling was aroused by the "shore leave" of the Tsar's children, when they played on the beach and bought picture postcards, and by the visit of the Imperial party to Osborne—the elders going by water privately—where they were shown over the Naval College by Prince Edward of Wales.

The visit was an unqualified success. The arrangements left nothing to be desired, and the magnificent display of British naval power was one that was not likely to be quickly forgotten either by the Tsar or his ministers. Throughout the visit the Tsar had been in the most cheerful mood, and both he and his staff had entered into everything with a thoroughly holiday spirit. Isvolsky, however, who was as amiable as usual, was by no means so cheerful. He was still haunted by the recollection of the unpopularity he had recently incurred over Russia's humiliation in deference to Austria and Germany. He looked forward with pleasure, however, to spending the week-end at Rufford, and in the course of a long conversation with him at dinner on board the yacht the King spoke to him about the glories of Sherwood Forest and the Dukeries, and the daring deeds of Robin Hood. More than one acute observer that evening noted in his or her private diary, "The King and M. Isvolsky discussed foreign affairs at length"!

The Tsar's visit had placed Anglo-Russian relations on a more cordial footing than ever, and the King was genuinely pleased with its undoubted success.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CLOSE OF THE REIGN

I

THE year 1910 dawned with England on the eve of a virulent general election in which the great constitutional issue of "The Lords *versus* the People" had played and was still to play no little part.

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Abroad, the antagonisms excited by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had begun to die down, but the naval and commercial rivalry between Great Britain and Germany showed no signs of slackening. King Edward in sending his customary congratulations to the Kaiser on his birthday (January 23, 1910) together with a superb walking-stick, reminded the Kaiser for the last time "that it is essential for the peace of the world that we should walk shoulder to shoulder for the good of civilisation and the prosperity of the world," and he expressed his regret that the press of the two countries were still stirring up strife.

The Kaiser's letter of thanks to his "Dearest Uncle," dated 31st January 1910, varied but little from his previous effusions:

Your kind lines and the valuable and useful present are renewed proof of your kindness to me. I hasten to thank you most warmly for these. The gift of the fine walking-stick has given me great pleasure; the taste and style is most refined and the execution of the work is very artistic. It is very like some of the sticks used by Frederick the Great which are still kept in our Museum. I heartily agree with you in your severe judgement on the mischief which is being wrought by an unscrupulous press lamentably deficient in veracity, prompted by greed for sensations. But I feel convinced that the main body of sensible people in the countries will remain unmoved and help to maintain

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the feelings of friendship and good will and to strengthen the ties between them.

Your remark "that it is essential for the peace of the world that we should walk shoulder to shoulder for the good of civilisation and the prosperity of the world" strikes a familiar note in my heart. This wish has always been the leading maxim of my policy and the good which I have ardently striven to reach. It is a firm part of my political creed that the future of the world would be assured and safeguarded if the Anglo-Saxon and the Teutonic races worked together. They are the powerful guardians of the ideals of Christian faith and Christian civilisation and it is their common duty to proclaim and disseminate them over the world.

This task is imposed upon them by Providence! It ought by its scope and greatness alone suffice to put a stop to all heckling and squabbling between them. It must remind them that Providence is waiting for them to return to their work, which they are in danger of neglecting. This once brought home to the people and fully realised and understood by them, they will soon I trust sink their differences and agree to join hands in the common cause.

A few days later the Kaiser wrote jubilantly to the Bishop of Ripon (Dr. Boyd Carpenter, who had been a great favourite of the Empress Frederick):

An exchange of views by letter between His Majesty the King and me about the relations of our two countries has shown our notions to be at a perfect unison. . . .

The New Year found King Edward at Sandringham with the Queen and other members of the royal family, and a few days later he left to pay a visit of a week's duration with the Queen to Lord Iveagh at Elveden Hall, where he was a fellow-guest with his old friends the Marquis de Soveral, Lord and Lady Arran, Lord Farquhar, the Hon. Mrs. Greville, the Hon. Mrs. George Keppel, Mr. and Mrs. James, and the Hon. Harry Stonor and Lord Carrington. The King looked really well, and seemed in great spirits, but was very anxious about the political situation, though it was understood there was to be no political talk in his presence. As was his custom he played bridge every evening and was in bed by midnight. Each morning he was out with the guns, and enjoyed the clear bracing air and the exercise.

On the 8th January the King left Elveden for Buckingham Palace prior to visiting Mr. Arthur Sassoon at Hove. Parliament

was dissolved on 10th January and the new Parliament summoned for 15th February. On 14th January the general election began with the unopposed return of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and two other Unionists, but the result of the pollings was to dash Conservative hopes of turning out the Liberal ministry, and to give the Liberal government a majority which, with the support of the Irish and Labour members, was quite adequate for their purpose of carrying through the hotly debated Budget of 1909 and of checking the power of the Lords. But they lost on the balance seventy-five seats, and their former numerical superiority to any combination of other parties disappeared

II

There were many hints abroad that the King himself was intervening unconstitutionally in the question of the House of Lords, but the only foundation for such an assumption were the King's interviews with leading Liberal and Conservative politicians with a view to finding a peaceable solution to the controversy. The King throughout was as loyal to constitutional practice as he had always been; but he did go so far as to state to Lord Crewe his own view on the reform of the House of Lords. A week after the general election, at the end of January 1910, Lord Crewe was the King's guest at Windsor—one of a small party of men only. After dinner on the 30th January the King called him aside and said he wished to speak to him about the future of the House of Lords. He had, he said, been much concerned at the strong feeling that had been aroused between the two Houses of Parliament, and he felt that something ought to be done to redress the inequality between the two political parties in the House of Lords. He had been giving the subject a good deal of thought, but hitherto had not mentioned his ideas to anybody, not even to Lord Knollys. In conversation with Lord Crewe he said that he was quite convinced that it was wiser to take the House of Lords as it was and to make use of the large amount of good material there, rather than to attempt to create a new chamber. He suggested, therefore, that the House should remain exactly as it was for every purpose except that of voting. Every peer would have his seat in the House, and be entitled to speak if he desired, but only one hundred would be able to vote. Lord

Crewe enquired how these should be selected. The King replied that, after carefully considering various methods, he believed that the soundest plan would be to let the two leaders (at that time Lord Lansdowne and Lord Crewe) each nominate fifty for the term of a Parliament. There was a great deal of independent opinion in the House of Lords, even among those who were strong adherents of either party, and he was convinced that, when it came to a critical division, there would always be a certain number of moderate-minded men who would wish to avoid a collision with the House of Commons. This would mean that important government measures, which might be disliked by the great majority of the whole House, would never be thrown out on the second reading, and even on the third reading they would be passed with some amendments ending in a compromise. Lord Crewe wisely pointed out that the party leaders in all probability might be tempted to select peers who would support their party through thick and thin, rather than those whose qualifications and experience made them particularly distinguished members of the present House. For example, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who belonged to no party, and Lord Rosebery, who was not now regarded as a party man, might very possibly be omitted from both lists. The King agreed that this was an undoubted difficulty but thought that some way could probably be found for disposing of it, and of settling the many details of the scheme which he had only outlined. He asked Lord Crewe to think the proposal over carefully, and promised to send for him again later in the year, when the question could be gone into further. Lord Crewe remarked that

> during the conversation I had with His Majesty I was impressed by his shrewd appreciation of the difficulties surrounding the creation of a new Second Chamber, difficulties which were thoroughly realised when, several years later, the whole subject was for the first time closely examined by the joint Conference of both Houses, presided over by Lord Bryce.[1]

In spite of the King's wish to go further into the matter with Lord Crewe, this line of possible reform was not further explored. It was not incompatible, at any rate, with the action foreshadowed in the King's speech a month later and there is little

[1] Lord Crewe's memorandum of the conversation.

doubt but that had the King lived, he would have devoted his energies and tact to the solution of the problem of the reform of the House of Lords As it is, the problem remains still unsolved.

III

Early in February the King left Windsor for Brighton, where he again stayed with his old friends the Sassoons, and on 10th February he was visited by the Prime Minister.[1]

Three months previously Lord O'Hagan, one of the Lords in Waiting, had resigned The King, on hearing the news from Vaughan Nash, the Prime Minister's secretary, had minuted, "I am very sorry he is resigning as he is an honest man, for which I respect him. The vacancy need not be filled up at present." But Mr. Asquith now suggested the names of Lord Craven, Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Loch, or Lord Tweedmouth, or "perhaps Ivor Guest with a peerage." The King preferred "either Loch or Tweedmouth," and in the event appointed the latter[2] Mr. Asquith now suggested certain cabinet changes consequent upon Mr. (afterwards Lord) Gladstone's acceptance of the Governor-Generalship of South Africa. He proposed Mr. Winston Churchill in Gladstone's place as Home Secretary[3] and Mr. Sydney Buxton as President of the Board of Trade and a member of the cabinet. The King and the Prime Minister then discussed the Budget and the government's line of action. Two days later (February 12) the King wrote to Lord Knollys, who had remained in London:

[1] He had invited the Prime Minister to Windsor earlier in the month, but Mr. Asquith pleaded physical unfitness and that he had to go abroad direct from Fife as he was overtired. The delay vexed the King, who was surprised to receive a letter from Mrs. Asquith, through Lord Knollys, in which she expressed some surprise at the King's annoyance, but added that she desired to see the King to say how sorry her husband was that he had vexed him. Lord Knollys replied that he had submitted her letter to the King: "I am sure you know that he is always glad to see you, but he thinks that in this instance, as the matter in question is an official one, it will perhaps be better, if anything is said to him on the subject, it should come from the Prime Minister himself" The next day Mr Asquith himself wrote from Cannes to the King apologising for not going to Windsor before taking a holiday.

[2] On 24th February the Hon. Ivor Guest (Lord Ashby St. Ledgers) was appointed Paymaster-General *vice* Sir Joseph Clauston, resigned. The King agreed to the promotion, but not so willingly to the peerage (February 14). Other ministerial changes followed on 1st March

[3] As Home Secretary in the new Parliament, Mr. Churchill sent the King reports of the parliamentary debates—good spirited letters with a Disraelian touch that pleased the King.

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The Prime Minister has come and gone and I had an hour's conversation with him. He was amiable and reasonable, but finds himself in a very "tight place." When I see you on Monday morning I will tell you the gist of the conversation. I enclose different papers received from him, which I shall keep, and had no alternative but to accede to the changes in the Cabinet which he submitted. One thing is certain, that the Budget, and only that, will come first, and the financial affairs, as the Government of the Country must be carried on. This might extend over Easter.

I should be glad if you would ask Sandars (Mr. Balfour's private secretary) to come and see *you* on Monday at 1 o'clock, and then I shall ask him to come up to my room for a few minutes afterwards.

Asquith was indeed in a "very tight place." His majority with the Irish and Labour votes was 124 and it was now evident that the attitude of the 82 Irish Nationalist members to the budget was cold and critical, if not actually hostile, and there was a good deal of anxiety, if not of mistrust, among the rank and file of the Liberal party as to the plans and intentions of the government. The situation was recognised by the cabinet as "precarious, though not immediately dangerous."

The previous day (February 11) Mr. Asquith reported to the King that at a meeting of the cabinet that day it was resolved "not to advise or request any exercise of the royal prerogatives in existing circumstances, or until the government have submitted their plans to parliament. If in their judgement it should become their duty to tender any such advice, they would do so when, and not before, the actual necessity may arise." In short, Mr. Asquith would not invite the King to create sufficient Liberal peers to ensure the passing of the Budget by the Upper House until such a course was rendered imperative by some action of the House of Lords.

The King was now anxious to know whether the House of Lords would reject the Budget or not, and on his return from Brighton he saw Mr. Sandars, as arranged, and ascertained from him the intention of the Opposition with regard to the future of the Budget. He learnt that Mr. Balfour and his party were still in a fighting mood, and he communicated that intelligence to the Prime Minister (February 15):

My dear Prime Minister—I had hoped that the result of the "feeler" I threw out yesterday might have been of a nature which would have minimised the difficult position in which the Government now finds itself, but from what I can gather I find that the Opposition will probably vote against the Government on the Budget, in consequence of the attitude which they took up, both in Parliament and at the Elections, in regard to the salient points of that measure.

I understand, however, that it is not the wish of the Opposition to throw unnecessary obstacles in the way of the Government business which is connected with finance.

Believe me, etc Edward R.

Although anxious to assist the Prime Minister in every way, the King was by no means pleased with the somewhat reticent communications of the Prime Minister, and there was a good deal of coolness between the King and the leading Liberal ministers before the new Parliament opened. The Prime Minister feared that the King might show his displeasure at the constitutional issue by declining to open the new Parliament on 22nd February, but the King's answer was brief and emphatic (January 12, 1910):

It is at present my full intention of opening Parliament with the Queen, as I have done on all previous occasions since my accession to the Throne.

On 15th February Mr. Asquith submitted to the King the speech from the throne to be delivered on that occasion. In response to the King's criticisms and suggestions he made several alterations to the last two paragraphs. The speech, as finally worded, was brief. After referring to the approaching establishment of the South African Union, and to the impending South African visit of the Prince of Wales to the first meeting of the reformed and enlarged Legislative Councils of India, and to the increased cost of the navy, the speech proceeded:

You will also be asked to complete the provision which was made in the last session of Parliament for the year about to expire, but to which effect has not yet been given. The expenditure authorised by the last Parliament is being duly incurred; but as the revenue required to meet it has not yet been provided by the imposition of taxation recourse has been had, under Parliamentary sanction, to temporary borrowing. Arrangements must be made at the earliest possible moment to deal with the financial situation thus created.

My Lords and Gentlemen—Recent experience has disclosed serious difficulties due to recurring differences of strong opinion between the two branches of the Legislature.

Proposals will be laid before you, with all convenient speed, to define the relations between the Houses of Parliament, so as to secure the undivided authority of the House of Commons over Finance, and its predominance over Legislation.

The measures, in the opinion of my advisers, should provide that this House (of Lords) should be so constituted and empowered as to exercise impartially in regard to proposed Legislation the functions of initiation, revision and, subject to proper safeguards, of delay.

The presence in the last sentence of the phrase "in the opinion of my advisers" gave rise to the misconception that the words were the King's interpolation, and were intended to express his personal unwillingness to identify himself with his ministers' policy. As a matter of fact the phrase was, like the rest of the paragraph, from the Prime Minister's pen, and the King made no comment on it when the draft was submitted to him. A similar formula had appeared previously in the speeches of sovereigns to parliament when they were under the formal obligation of announcing a warmly controverted policy of their ministers' devising. The King's personal misgivings of the constitutional change were well known, and it was courteous to absolve him of any possible implication of a personal responsibility.

IV

The Liberal party, the Irish, the Labour members, and indeed the country in general, had understood from Mr. Asquith's declaration at the Albert Hall before the election—"We shall not hold office unless we can secure the safeguards which experience shows to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress"—that he had already obtained "guarantees" from the King—in other words, that he had been assured that if the Lords refused to pass a Bill limiting their own power of veto, new peers sufficient to make a majority for the passage of the measure would be created. On the very day of the opening of Parliament, however, Mr. Asquith stated that he had neither asked for nor received such guarantees, and that it

would have been improper to ask for them. The announcement caused bitter disappointment among the Radicals But the immediate difficulty was with the Irish The government was now dependent on the Irish vote, and the Irish disliked many features of the Budget. They would have voted for it, or for anything else not touching their religion, if doing so meant removing the House of Lords from the path that led to Home Rule But without a fair prospect of that they were sure to make trouble and they might even destroy the government. Mr. Redmond pointedly informed Mr. Asquith that the Nationalists would not support the Budget, unless Mr. Asquith gave definite assurances "that the Veto Bill would this year become law . . . Let ministers give reasonable assurances that they could carry their Veto Bill this year, and the Nationalists would vote for the Budget. But they would not pay the price for nothing"

On 25th February, the day that the address was agreed to, Mr. Asquith reported to the King the way the cabinet had received the Irish threat. Some members of the cabinet, he said, were of opinion that, "in view of the exorbitant demands of Mr. Redmond and his followers, and the impossibility under existing parliamentary conditions of counting upon a stable government majority, the wisest and most dignified course for ministers was at once to tender their resignation to Your Majesty." Other ministers, however, pointed out that the adoption of such a course would be lacking in courage; that the government were pledged to produce and lay on the table their proposals with regard to the House of Lords; and it was urged that they could not honourably retire unless they were defeated in the House of Commons before, or upon, disclosure of their plans. As a result of the cabinet meeting the Master of Elibank (who had been called in) was instructed to inform Mr. Redmond that the cabinet were not prepared to give any assurances that the Veto Bill would be passed within a year, and that he must act on his responsibility, as they would on theirs. Asquith, in effect, told Redmond to do his worst. Whatever he may have been at other times, Mr. Asquith was certainly master of his own cabinet during the whole of this episode.

V

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The King's health was now causing no little anxiety to his doctors. He was subject to violent fits of spasmodic coughing from which it sometimes seemed that he could scarcely recover. The exertion was terrifying to those who witnessed it, and occasionally he appeared to be choking. This was the reason of his annual trips to Biarritz or some other place blessed with an atmosphere purer than that of the London which he loved. These journeys, which have been ungenerously attributed to the love of pleasure, were really a matter of necessity; they furnished in a mild degree that oxygen which in its pure state is administered to the dying in order to relieve the pain of breathing—the pain from which he so often suffered.

In the early days of 1910 the King seemed to outsiders to be much in his usual health; but the doctors were nervous and anxious, they were eager to get him away from London. "If he had been a private individual," said one of them, "we should have had him away long ago. We know how serious his condition is." The King, although greatly troubled by his throat, was unwilling to go on account of the political crisis, and it was only when Mr. Asquith added his insistence to that of the physicians that King Edward eventually decided to go—a decision that was facilitated by a temporary lull in the political turmoil. On 26th February the King held his last official dinner at Buckingham Palace, to which the King's old friend, Lord Carrington, was invited. Lord Carrington noted that the King was "most cordial and kind," and "very anxious about foreign traffic in worn-out horses," and "keen to be away from London fogs."[1] Many acute observers noticed that the King seemed depressed by the political situation, and that the strain of overwork was beginning to tell. Indigestion and slight bronchial catarrh added to his depression and it was with feelings of keen anticipation that he spoke of leaving the fogs and gloom of London for the sunny openness and warmth of Biarritz on 7th March. Mr. Balfour thought that the King's long absence would be "a good thing," and hoped he would not return until after the Easter holidays, as there was much to be gained by his "not

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

having any personal intercourse with any of his ministers just at present." [1]

Just before leaving England the King gave on 6th March a great dinner-party—to which only his male friends were invited. He was in excellent spirits, and after dinner went the round of his guests, as was his wont, and chatted gaily with each of them. As he was leaving the room he stopped for a moment to talk to Lord Redesdale, and spoke with all his natural cheerfulness, like a boy before a holiday, of his journey which was to take place on the morrow.

It was not long before the anxiety felt by his doctors was justified. Whilst in Paris he had a violent attack of acute indigestion which was followed by a great shortness of breath and sharp pain near the heart. A cold caught in the Théâtre Porte St. Martin, where he witnessed the performance of M. Rostand's *Chantecler*, developed rapidly on the way south, and at Biarritz a severe and prolonged attack of bronchitis followed, which caused Sir James Reid, his physician in attendance, much alarm. The world at large was not told how ill he was, and the secret was well kept from all those who were not behind the scenes, but for a week he seemed to be wrestling with death; that time he conquered, but the victory was ephemeral.

The moment the King had recovered he set to work to make up for the time he had lost—only those who were with him then have any idea of the amount of work that he then transacted. Even when he was ill his mind was full of the political problem at home, which worried and distressed him to an extent which was almost incredible.

Within a few days of his recovery he met Queen Amélie of Portugal, and the meeting gave rise to rumours that the young King Manoel of Portugal was to marry one of the King's nieces, and the report ran that the King's approval was dependent upon the internal conditions of the country and an inquiry into the circumstances of the assassination of King Carlos and his elder son. The Portuguese Foreign Minister, however, deprecated any such discussion as it affronted the national dignity. [2]

[1] Esher to Knollys, 15th April.

[2] Five months later the Portuguese revolution broke out and King Manoel fled to England. In Sir Arthur Hardinge's view, the Portuguese monarchy might still be functioning had it only received adequate support from Great Britain.

Six weeks later, during the spring recess, Mr. Asquith and Mr. McKenna, on the Admiralty yacht *Enchantress*, paid a visit of inspection to Gibraltar. At the request of the King they put in at Lisbon to pay their respects to King Manoel of Portugal and Amélie, the Queen Mother. They were enthusiastically received and generally fêted. Mr. Asquith's glowing account of his reception (May 3, 1910) was the last letter King Edward received from him, and to it the King replied, "Very glad that you liked your stay at Lisbon and that the King was so pleasant. E.R."

VI

Even at Biarritz the King could not escape the troubles of his high position. By chance he saw a copy of the *Nation* in which appeared a letter signed by "An Old Liberal." The writer complained that Mr. Asquith had not obtained the necessary guarantee from the King to create peers, and that there was some belief abroad that the King would decline and render the recent election futile. The letter developed ambiguous reflections on the King's attitude during the crisis. The King was annoyed, and complained that "the article about me in the *Nation* is most unfair, but was evidently inspired by the celebrated Albert Hall speech which now appears to have been far more elastic than was at first intended."

Not unnaturally the King's position and intentions were the subject of much conjecture. His own wish was that the Crown should be kept out of the political battle as far as possible, and that he should not be called upon to consider the question of the prerogative until every other means of obtaining a settlement had been tried.

On 17th March 1910 Mr. Churchill, speaking at Manchester, argued that a stronger second Chamber meant a weaker House of Commons, and that Lord Rosebery's plan for its reform made no provision against a deadlock between the two houses; indeed it destroyed the possibility of removing a deadlock by a creation of peers by the Crown. The King did not read the speech until some days later at Biarritz. Major Ponsonby, who was then writing to Lord Althorp (April 6) added:

The King thinks that as I am writing to you privately I might mention the following matter. The somewhat nebulous

allusions to the Crown in Winston Churchill's speech seem to have received various interpretations from different quarters, and it has been most distasteful to the King to find speeches, letters to the Press, and leading articles discussing the point and attributing various opinions to His Majesty The King thinks that you might privately tell the Prime Minister that he hopes that as far as possible Cabinet Ministers will refrain from mentioning His Majesty's name in their speeches or referring to him in their discussion.

The Prime Minister now announced his intention of introducing resolutions affirming the need of excluding Financial Bills from the veto of the House of Lords and of restricting the power of the Lords so that legislation passed by the Commons would become law within the lifetime of a single Parliament. In a subsequent year a Bill substituting a democratic for an hereditary Second Chamber would be produced, though he pointed out that the reform of the Lords was not an immediate issue. On March 21st Mr. Asquith tabled three resolutions which he had submitted to the King on the 16th; the first declared it expedient that the House of Lords should be disabled from rejecting or amending money bills; the second declared that if a Bill passed the Commons in three successive sessions and was thrice rejected by the Lords it should "become law without the consent of the House of Lords on the royal assent being declared", the third resolution limited the duration of any one Parliament to five years. All the resolutions were carried by 14th April, and Mr. Asquith now introduced a Bill founded on them.

Mr. Asquith was now in danger of seeing his parliamentary majority disappear All the Irish representatives had supported his resolutions regarding the House of Lords, but for various reasons were opposed to the Budget. It was obvious, as Mr. Asquith wrote to the King on 13th April, that if the total Irish vote in conjunction with that of the regular Opposition were cast against the Budget, the Budget would be defeated, "and your Majesty's present advisers would of necessity next week tender their resignation," and "a crisis, of an unexampled and most embarrassing kind, would thereupon arise," which might involve another general election after an interval of barely three months. Mr. Asquith added that it was with "an acute sense of these public disadvantages and dangers, and not any desire to prolong

their own official life, which, under existing conditions, is far from being a bed of roses," that had induced the cabinet to authorise the Chancellor of the Exchequer to interchange views on the subject of the Budget with the leaders of the two sections of the Nationalist party (Mr. Redmond and Mr. Dillon). The result of these *pourparlers* was that "there were certain minor points, mainly of definition, to which the Irish attach importance, and in regard to which amendments may be introduced which will in no way affect the substance of the Budget." But their main objection was to the newly increased duty on whisky, and they pressed strongly for a reinstatement of the old duty. After full consideration, the cabinet came to the conclusion that the transformation of the whisky duty into a temporary tax, "would be a modification in the framework of the Budget, which would not be consistent with their promises." "The Irish demand, has, therefore, been rejected, and it is possible, and at this moment not improbable, that in consequence, the Nationalists may on Monday combine with the Unionist Opposition to defeat the government. Your Majesty's advisers are strongly and unanimously of opinion that to purchase the Irish vote by such a concession would be a discreditable transaction which they could not defend."

To this startling communication the King replied from Biarritz:

The King has received the Prime Minister's communication of 13th instant, relating to the present situation of the government. There is no doubt that a grave political crisis might reign on Monday next (18th) should the government be defeated on the Budget. The Irish party may, however, abstain from voting or they may vote against the government. The King expects to receive a telegram from the Prime Minister on Tuesday morning (19th) informing him of the result of the division in the House of Commons. E.R.

But before the 18th, Mr. Asquith and the Irish had reached an arrangement, and the support of the Irish was given in return for "a promise in so many words." It was a transaction that did not commend itself to many keen politicians and Mr. Balfour voiced the opinion of a great number when he said that Mr. Asquith had deliberately bought the Irish vote for the Budget, and the price he had paid was the dignity of his office.

On 19th April, the Finance Bill was introduced with a few

changes which doubtless pleased the Irish. The second reading was carried on 25th April and the third reading on 27th April. The next day it passed the House of Lords and on 29th April —the day of adjournment for Easter recess—it received the royal assent. Those who watched that historic ceremony might be excused if they felt some satire on the Upper House in the traditional formula "Le roy remercie ses bons sujets, accepte leur benevolence, et ainsi le veut" The ancient form seemed to emphasise the truth that in money matters the Crown and the Commons had direct relations, and that interference by the peers was an impertinence not to be entertained.

The Budget had thus been passed—the first great fight was over. But a greater remained, and there was every indication that the fight over the House of Lords' veto would be much more bitter and far more likely to involve the Crown. The battle had already been joined. In introducing the Finance Bill early in April Mr. Asquith had made the government's position perfectly clear:

> If the Lords fail to accept our policy . . . we shall feel it our duty immediately to tender advice to the Crown as to the steps which will have to be taken if that policy is to have statutory effect in this Parliament. . . . If we do not find ourselves in a position to ensure that statutory effect we shall then either resign our offices or recommend a dissolution of Parliament. Let me add this, that in no case should we recommend a dissolution except under such conditions as will secure that in the new Parliament the judgment of the people, as expressed at the election, will be carried into law.

This was decisive so far as the government was concerned. But it left the King's attitude uncertain. His great wish was that the quarrel should not be fought out. His genuine desire for a peaceful solution and the natural horror which every monarch must feel at the very suggestion of a degradation of the patrician order, all inclined him to postpone the matter, since he could not for the moment see any way of settling it.

VII

Scarcely a day passed without the advent of state papers from England, and to each and every one of them King Edward gave

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his full and prompt attention. Thus, although he was nominally on holiday, several hours every day were taken up with affairs of state.

On 29th March Lord Crewe wrote submitting the name of Sir J. Dickson-Poynder for the Governorship of New Zealand, and suggested a peerage with a K.C.M.G., quoting the precedent of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who had received a peerage on his appointment to the Governor-Generalship of South Africa a month earlier. The King approved the appointment "but he thinks," as Sir Arthur Davidson wrote to Lord Crewe on 1st April,

the conferment of a peerage at the same moment is rather premature, and if necessary it should come later. The peerage conferred upon Mr. Herbert Gladstone was in a different category. He had performed important political services—he had held high office as a Secretary of State, and he was about to be appointed a Governor-General.

Sir John Dickson-Poynder's services, though doubtless valuable and useful, can hardly be considered as distinguished, and he is being appointed Governor of a Colony and not Governor-General.

Under these circumstances, the King thinks the present bestowal of a K.C.M.G., according to precedent, while leaving the peerage to come later, would be sufficient.

Private.—The King cannot quite understand why there should be this great hurry over the appointment as it must have been under consideration for some little time.

The King would have liked to see Sir J. Dickson-Poynder before his departure to invest him with the K.C.M.G., and hopes, therefore, he will be able to defer his departure till the latter part of April to enable the King to carry out his intention.

The King, however, subsequently approved the grant of the peerage "although," as Major Ponsonby wrote to Lord Althorp on 6th April:

he still thinks it is a pity that a man like Poynder, who is practically unknown and whose only claim to distinction lies in the fact that he was converted to Liberal principles somewhat late in life, should receive the same honour as Gladstone.

His Majesty, however, perfectly understands your reasons for delaying the appointment, and appreciates the arguments you give for thinking it advisable to send a Peer to New Zealand. . . .

The King is rather amused to think that while the mother

country is contemplating abolishing Peers altogether, New Zealand, perhaps the most democratic of all his dominions, should set so much store on having a Peer as Governor !

In accordance with the King's wish Sir J. Dickson-Poynder (who now took the title of Lord Islington) remained in England until the King's return from Biarritz, and one of the King's last acts was to invite him to Buckingham Palace to kiss hands on his formal appointment as Governor of New Zealand.

VIII

Here, too, at Biarritz the King received his last news from India. In mid-April he received a letter from the retiring Viceroy, written on 21st March, which brought a minor measure of good news. Lord Minto was "glad to be able to assure His Majesty that there are many indications at present of a happier feeling throughout the country" The Indian members on the Viceroy's Legislative Council were proving of great service. "Mr. Sinha has been of the greatest use to the Viceroy and to his Government." . . . "no Government of India has ever possessed a stronger, more level-headed, and loyal member than he is" In spite of "plots which are hatched in London and Paris, there is, however, a most extraordinary change for the better in the political atmosphere. Everyone feels it and talks about it and the wish and endeavours to guard against outrages are growing everywhere. The Viceroy hopes, however, that he may now tell His Majesty that notwithstanding many difficulties, the outlook for the future is brighter, even though the Government of India must be prepared to deal with the possibility of further outrages."

The King's only comment on this lengthy report are the words "Ansd. Apr. 12th E.R.", but his actual reply is unfortunately not available.

A few days later the King left Biarritz and the sunny Basque coast, never to return Just before he was due to leave he went out on to his private verandah, and, looking over the blue waters, said with an unwonted sadness: "I shall be sorry to leave Biarritz," and then, after a pause, he added slowly, "perhaps for good."

IX

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At 6 P.M. on 27th April the King arrived in London on his return from Biarritz in good spirits and apparently the better for his holiday. Two hours later he was well enough, or imprudent enough, to go to the opera at Covent Garden, which he never willingly missed. Queen Alexandra was meantime absent on a Mediterranean cruise, sojourning for the time at Corfu. The next day the King took up for the last time the full routine of kingship, and that afternoon paid, as was his wont, a visit to the Royal Academy.

Three audiences had been arranged for that morning, the first with Lord Kitchener, who had just arrived in England, the second with Mr. Asquith, and the third with Viscount Althorp, the Lord Chamberlain. Mr. Haldane, however, suggested to Lord Knollys (April 25) that Mr. Asquith should see the King first "for in the appointment (of the new Viceroy) to India Asquith may, and probably will, have advice to tender," and the King deferred to Mr. Haldane's suggestion.

Mr. Asquith made no difficulty on the score of the Indian appointment, and made it clear that he hoped that an interview between Lord Morley and the King would settle the matter, but there was little hope of settlement while the Secretary for India was set on Sir Charles Hardinge and the King on Lord Kitchener. Shortly after Mr. Asquith had left, the King received Lord Kitchener (who now formally relinquished his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, India), presented him with the baton of Field-Marshal and absolved him from the promise to assume the unnecessary Mediterranean command.

That same day (April 28) Mr. Asquith sent his last cabinet letter to the King in which he dealt with departmental matters—"the recent judgement in the Swansea school case, and the best way of dealing with the site of the Duke of York's school, at Chelsea," which it was hoped to secure as the headquarters for the London Territorial forces. But Mr. Asquith added that instructions had been given to the parliamentary draftsman "to prepare in outline, for future consideration, a Bill for holding all elections on the same day, and a Bill for submitting to popular vote, without the need for a general election, the proposals which

the government had made in regard to the relations between the two Houses of Parliament."

The following day (Friday the 29th April) the King saw Lord Morley and discussed with him the appointment of a successor to Lord Minto as Viceroy of India. The King was a great admirer of Lord Kitchener, and pressed earnestly for his appointment. The new Field-Marshal had made no secret to Mr. Haldane of "his firm expectation" of appointment to the post, to which Morley, with whom the decision rested, was opposed, though Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, was by no means reluctant to appoint Kitchener The King did not take kindly to the other name suggested, although Sir Charles Hardinge was one of his greatest friends, and he was insistent for Lord Kitchener, but Morley "would not hear of it." King Edward urged against Hardinge "that a man should stick to his last—that he was a diplomatist, not an administrator"[1]

On 29th April 1910 Lord Morley wrote to Lord Minto (who himself favoured Kitchener's appointment)

To-day I had an audience in high quarters, and found the atmosphere almost torrid in the same direction. However, the end of it was that I promised to turn all the arguments over again in my mind, until the holiday comes to an end, four weeks from now. In spite of strong opinion of his own, the King parted from me with singular kindness and geniality. He was very much in earnest, but not for an instant did he cease to be kindly, considerate, genial, nor did he press his point with an atom of anything like overweening insistence.[2]

Morley's objections to Kitchener's appointment were due to his dislike of appointing a soldier to a post normally held by a civilian. "The impression made in India," he wrote to Minto, "by sending your greatest soldier to follow reforms makes them look a practical paradox."[3]

That same day the King gave audiences to Mr. Haldane, with whom he discussed the progress of the Territorial scheme; Count

[1] *The Personality of Lord Morley*, by J. H. Morgan, 1924.

[2] Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii. pp. 331-2.

[3] In the event, the King's death a week later removed the obstacles to Morley's wishes. It may be doubted, if King Edward had lived, whether Morley's doubts would have been overcome. As it was, at the King's funeral, the appointment was offered by Morley to Hardinge, and Lord Kitchener, after a year of "unemployment," became Consul-General in Egypt.

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Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador; the Portuguese Minister (the Marquis de Soveral), and Lieutenant-General Sir F. R. Wingate (Sirdar of the Egyptian Army and Governor-General of the Soudan). The Earl Beauchamp (Lord Steward) and Mr. William Dudley Ward, M.P. (Treasurer of the Household), also had audiences of his Majesty, and presented addresses from the House of Lords and House of Commons respectively, to which the King "was graciously pleased to make a reply." At luncheon the King entertained Lord and Lady Gladstone prior to their departure for South Africa, and Lord Gladstone kissed hands upon his appointment as Governor-General.

X

The King had returned to meet an impasse in British politics which it is doubtful whether even his tact and *savoir faire* could have overcome. Mr. Asquith in his letter to the King of 13th April had pointed out that there was no immediate need for the King to abbreviate his holiday, though he pointed out that if the Irish were to vote against the government, the government would immediately resign. The King now confronted the possibility of Mr. Asquith's resignation in the event of a deadlock over the Finance Bill. In this case he might presumably send for Mr. Balfour, Lord Rosebery, or Mr. Lloyd George to form a ministry. But Mr. Balfour could not now command a majority, and could only obtain one by recourse to another election; Lord Rosebery was impossible for reasons of health; there remained only Mr. Lloyd George, who, even if the Liberal Imperialists were to sulk in their tents, might carry on with the aid of Irish and Labour votes, and go to the country on an alarmingly "advanced" programme with a possible chance of success. One, Lady C——,[1] declared that Mr. Asquith actually told the King that he ought to send for Mr. Lloyd George in his (Mr. Asquith's) place. This roused the King, who, as a rule, had good command over himself, for although he liked most of the Liberal ministers, he had little love for Mr. Lloyd George, who was then considered in many quarters a demagogue of the most dangerous tendencies. It is noteworthy that during the whole of King Edward's reign Mr. Lloyd George never acted as "Minister in Attendance." In the

[1] Quoted in *My Diaries*, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, p. 318.

event, therefore, the King had the choice of granting to Mr. Asquith those "guarantees" he sought, or of accepting his resignation and appointing a successor whose actions would be altogether incalculable

There was no lack of advice to the King during the crisis, but most of it was offered from a party standpoint. One sibilant whisper, however, was heard continually advising the King to assert his royal power—to refuse to create the peers—to decline to accept the formal advice of his ministers. The whisper came from Lord Esher, who had fortified himself by a thorough study of history and precedent. Mr. Asquith in his cabinet communication of 13th April, surely one of the most serious ever sent by a Prime Minister to a King in times of peace, deemed it his duty to advise that "the necessary steps be taken to ensure that the policy approved by the House of Commons by large majorities should be given statutory effect in Parliament" Those "steps" might have been the creation of a vast number of peers, they might have been a referendum, they might have been something entirely different, but whatever they might have been, it was held by Lord Crewe and others that the request for them would not be a request in the ordinary sense of the word, to which the King might give or refuse assent as he thought fit, but would be "advice" which as a constitutional monarch he would be bound to accept. Lord Esher, however, now urged the precedent of 9th May 1832, when Earl Grey in his speech assumed that the King *may not receive* the advice of his ministers, and quoted Earl Grey's words.

We offered to His Majesty the advice which we thought it our duty under the circumstances to offer, the alternative was accepted by His Majesty, and he was graciously pleased to accept our resignation.

King William IV.'s attitude on that occasion had never been condemned or criticised. The inference was that a sovereign was not bound to accept the "advice" of his ministers, provided he could find another set of ministers to carry on the government.

It is doubtful whether the King ever saw Lord Esher's memorandum of 3rd May, but it is probable that even had he seen it, he would not have deviated from the strict path of

constitutional action which he had always followed. Subsequent history proves that the steps which Mr. Asquith contemplated were the advising the sovereign to create peers to ensure that the will of the people should prevail over the will of the Lords, and King Edward's son and successor was constitutionally correct in accepting such advice instead of embarking upon a line of action of which no man could have foreseen the outcome.

XI

In the three days that had elapsed since his return to England, the King had seen nearly all the principal ministers of state, and had rapidly taken up the threads of the intricate political web. On 30th April, feeling a little unwell, he left London for a week-end at Sandringham, accompanied only by Sir Dighton Probyn and an equerry. On Sunday 1st May, after attending divine service, he spent a long time in the gardens, whilst the weather was still bitterly cold, windy, and rainy, inspecting some planting operations. No one had courage or influence enough to stop him from going out, and the result was that a fresh chill was contracted. He reached Buckingham Palace next afternoon feeling somewhat chilly and out of sorts. That evening he imprudently dined out in private with a friend. On reaching Buckingham Palace late that night (May 2) his breathing became difficult, and a severe bronchial attack set in. He passed a disturbed night. Next morning his physicians regarded his condition as rather serious, but no early crisis was anticipated. Notwithstanding the urgent desire of his physicians that he should rest quietly, the King rose as usual and transacted business, seeing Lord Roberts (who noted with surprise that he was not smoking), and making arrangements with his friend the American Ambassador, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, for the reception the following week of Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, the ex-President of the United States of America, who had announced a visit to England. He spoke regretfully of the superiority of the climate of Biarritz to that of London. "Our talk," related Mr. Whitelaw Reid to Mrs. Taft,[1] "was interrupted by spasms of coughing, and I found that he was suffering from a good many symptoms of which I had such painful experience myself during the

[1] Quoted in Royal Cortissoz's *Life of Whitelaw Reid*, vol. ii. p. 441.

winters when bronchial asthma banished me to Arizona. It seems to me that these attacks are coming on more frequently within the last two years, and that they are becoming harder to shake off Still, he is a man of tremendous vigour of constitution, and of extraordinarily energetic habits. The general public think him in perfect health; but I am impressed with the notion that in the inner circles there is more anxiety about him lately than I have ever observed at any time before." The King welcomed Mr. Reid's suggestion that he should attend a formal dinner at Dorchester House in Mr. Roosevelt's honour, and spoke eagerly of meeting the ex-President. Other audiences were given during the day, but by the evening the King had to admit to his physicians that he felt ill. During the two following days the symptoms underwent little change. Each day the King insisted upon getting up and dressing with his customary spruceness, but he was counselled against conversation.

In spite of warnings that he should rest, the King continued to transact business, receiving each morning in formal audience representatives of the Dominions. On 4th May he received the Hon. Newton J. Moore (Premier of Western Australia), and Admiral Sir E. S. Poe upon his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean. Ill as he was, he worked with all his accustomed energy, but when one of the permanent heads of the Civil Service was with him he was seized with another of those terrible choking fits of coughing. When he got better his visitor ventured to remonstrate with him, and begged him to rest, and even go to bed; but he ridiculed the idea and said, "No, I shall not give in—I shall work to the end. Of what use is it to be alive if one cannot work?" [1]

On Thursday 5th May he received the newest peer, Lord Islington, who kissed hands upon his appointment as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of New Zealand, and he considered details of the welcome to be accorded to a royal visitor from Japan, Prince Fushimi. Major T. B. Robinson [2] (Agent-General for Queensland) also had the honour of being received, and presented to the King a gold-mounted inkstand as a souvenir

[1] Lord Redesdale's *King Edward VII.* pp. 32-3.

[2] Afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Robinson, G.B.E. He remained Agent-General for Queensland until 1919

from the government of Queensland. Major Robinson was the King's last official visitor.

All the royal family were now gathered at Buckingham Palace, and one or two of the King's dearest friends were allowed to see him. The breathing difficulty fluctuated, but did not yield to treatment. For a short time the King felt better, and with that strong and courageous resolution that was one of his most noteworthy characteristics said, "I am feeling better and intend to fight this. I shall be about again in a day." [1] Meanwhile Queen Alexandra had been informed of the King's illness and returned that afternoon from Corfu, and the fact that the King was not at the station to meet her was the first indication to the public that he was indisposed. The King, however, was reluctant for any announcement of his condition to be made, but he was persuaded by the Prince of Wales to assent to the issue of a bulletin on the ground that his enforced inability to meet the Queen according to custom on her arrival at the railway station called for explanation. He modified the draft with his own hand, and at 7.30 a bulletin signed by Sir Francis Laking, Sir James Reid, and Sir R. D. Powell announced that the King was suffering "from bronchitis and that his condition causes some anxiety." That evening the news of the King's condition first appeared in the press. The King had so frequently recovered from various indispositions that few for the moment contemplated the possibility of a fatal issue.

The next day (Friday, May 6) proved his last. When his physicians saw him that morning, it was at once evident that the gravity of the symptoms had increased. The King was calm and collected. He tried to smoke a cigar, but could not enjoy it, and he was forced to confess that he felt "miserably ill." He had arranged to see his old friend Sir Ernest Cassel at 11 o'clock, but in view of the gravity of the King's state Sir Ernest was told that the King would not be well enough to see him. The King, however, persisted in rising as usual and asked after his old friend. A second message was immediately sent to Sir Ernest begging him to come. Even on this day the King's habitual courtesy did not leave him and, ill as he was, he rose to welcome his old friend. "I knew that you would not fail me," he said. They remained talking for a while about Sir Ernest's daughter, but it was soon

[1] Sir Almeric Fitzroy's *Memoirs*, p. 401.

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Queen Alexandra

1913

evident that the sufferer's strength was waning. Sir Ernest took his leave feeling that it was for the last time. That day Sir Ernest wrote to his daughter, Mrs. Wilfrid Ashley:

. . . At 11 o'clock this morning Davidson called me to the telephone to say the King was too unwell to receive me. Half an hour afterwards there was a message from Lord Knollys that I should come to the Palace at once. Laking saw me first and asked me to let the King speak as little as possible. Then I was taken up to see the Queen first, who exhorted me to stay a few moments. . . . At last I was asked to go into the King's room, but then evidently the order came out that an Equerry was to bring me, and it took some time to find one. Finally I was ushered in and found the King dressed as usual, in his sitting-room, rising from his chair to shake hands with me. He looked as if he had suffered great pain, and spoke indistinctly. His kindly smile came out as he congratulated me on having you brought home so much improved in health. He said, "I am very seedy, but I wanted to see you. Tell your daughter how glad I am that she has safely got home and that I hope she will be careful and patient so as to recover complete health." He then talked about other matters, and I had to ask his leave to go as I felt it was not good for him to go on speaking. . . . Sir James Reid told me he had dressed on purpose to receive me, and they could not stop him. . . .

Special instructions were now sought as to whether the King's horse, Witch of the Air, should fulfil her engagement for the Spring Two-Year-Old Plate at Kempton Park that day. Orders came from Buckingham Palace that she was to run; they were taken as a hopeful sign with regard to the King's health. Witch of the Air was duly saddled for her race, fixed for a quarter past four. To the delight of the spectators, she caught and passed Mr. Carroll's Queen Tii, who most people had supposed could hardly be beaten, and, amidst an outburst of cheering such as has always marked the royal victories, Witch of the Air won by half a length. The news was immediately telegraphed up to the King. It could scarcely have reached the Palace before five. Shortly afterwards, the Prince of Wales, not knowing that his father had already been informed, congratulated him on Witch of the Air's success, King Edward replying, "Yes, I have heard of it. I am very glad." As the day advanced the King fainted twice and signs of coma developed. By now the King realised how serious the attack was, and with his usual courage said

that "he meant to fight it."[1] In the evening his state was seen to be hopeless.

The King was now undressed and laid in his bed and soon became unconscious. Just before he passed into a comatose state he uttered the words, almost the same words he had said two days previously, "No, I shall not give in; I shall go on; I shall work to the end." He knew that he was dying, but he could face death as cheerfully as he had always faced life. He did not, said his doctors, know the meaning of fear. Although he realised the serious nature of his illness, he faced the position with the utmost fortitude. He would not surrender. At 11.45 P.M., just as the dull distant boom of Big Ben striking the three-quarters echoed through the silence, that courageous and loyal spirit breathed his last. Even in death he had displayed to the full those qualities of personal courage and devotion to duty which distinguished him. Active and vigorous almost to the end, he would not and could not yield to his physicians' pleas to rest. On his accession he had declared that he would work for his country "as long as there is breath in my body," and he had faithfully kept his word.

XII

The news of the King's death was received by the waiting crowd outside Buckingham Palace just after midnight. The announcement, made by a member of the royal household in the simple words "The King is dead," was received in silence—an awe-stricken silence that was only paralleled when, six years later, Lord Kitchener went down in the *Hampshire*. After a momentary pause, part of the crowd began to disperse, carrying the sad news to the four quarters of the metropolis; but a still large portion of the crowd remained outside the gloomy building, and it was not until the great iron gates were closed at 1 15 A.M. that it finally dispersed.

The next morning the news was spread throughout the land. The shock stunned England. The King had seemed so well when he arrived from Biarritz ten days earlier that scarcely a soul had anticipated any serious outcome of his brief illness.

[1] Marquis of Lincolnshire's Diary.

To the last his energy was so vivid, the lamp of life's joy burnt so brightly in him, that men could not believe that the grey mystery had extinguished that sunny nature. But it was all too true: the ringing voice was silenced for ever: the King was dead. Within the space of ten years Great Britain had lost two sovereigns. Both were sincerely mourned by their subjects. But in grief, as in all else, there are qualities and degrees which differ. The sorrow which followed Queen Victoria to the grave was a tribute to a great and noble personality; it was the recognition of the value of long years of assiduous labour of a lonely life consecrated to the good of her country: personally to the vast majority she was unknown. For forty years she had lived, as the saying is in the East, "behind the curtain," and though her influence was felt, she herself was shrouded in something of awe—she was as invisible as Providence. King Edward, on the contrary, had been for half a century a most familiar figure in every part of the kingdom. Not hundreds, but thousands of men could claim that they had shaken hands with him, and could repeat some kindly word to which his genial manner had given emphasis and value. Every one of those myriads felt as though he had lost a personal friend—as if he in his humble self was the poorer.[1]

Never has a King been more widely or more sincerely deplored. As Lord Morley wrote to Lord Minto on 12th May:

> The feeling of grief and sense of personal loss throughout the country, indeed throughout Western Europe, is extraordinary, and without a single jarring note. It is in one way deeper and keener than when Queen Victoria died nine years ago, and to use the same word over again—more personal. He had just the character that Englishmen, at any rate, thoroughly understand, thoroughly like, and make any quantity of allowance for. It was odd how he managed to combine regal dignity with bonhomie, and strict regard for form with entire absence of spurious pomp.[2]

In the universal sorrow there was indeed a sense of personal bereavement which monarchs, by the very tenure of their office, can rarely inspire; an intimate consciousness of bereavement, which comes only at the cessation of a long friendship. Not only Britain but the whole Empire felt that they had lost not merely a King but a friend.

[1] Lord Redesdale's *King Edward VII.* pp. 41-2.
[2] Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii. pp. 331-2.

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Even from Ireland came countless messages of condolence, which were well summarised by *The Nationalist and Leinster Times* on 14th May.

"The death of Edward VII.," the leading article ran, "has evoked a general heart-throb throughout Ireland, and why should this occur? Even ten years ago the general manifestation of regret throughout Ireland on the demise of a sovereign would be absolutely impossible, a thing unthought of, a condition of things inconceivable. . . What then must Englishmen, and in fact the people of every nation on the earth, think of the manner in which Ireland has received the death of a sovereign who was the representative of a people who have held this country in political bondage for so long a period? Many have called the dead monarch 'Edward the Peacemaker,' and it is well known that he was the means of averting more than one war, that most terrible of human calamities, by his great qualities of judicious tact and common-sense. However, it is only in the interests of humanity that those foreign achievements of King Edward are of an interest to us in Ireland, but it is believed in many circles, both in England and Ireland, that the dead King unostentatiously assumed the rôle of peacemaker between England and this country, and was the first British sovereign to begin the work of reconciling the races which centuries of oppression, misgovernment, and misunderstanding had well-nigh made impossible. Rightly or wrongly this is the opinion of all those who at the various public Boards during the past week dwelt on the reputed friendliness of Edward the Seventh to this country. And that is why the sympathy of so many Irishmen and Nationalists went out to the family of the late King in their hour of sorrow and tribulation. . . . Former sovereigns of England and Great Britain passed away, and as far as Ireland was concerned they died 'unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.' History will therefore record that in the year 1910 Ireland was sorrow-swept at the news of the death of England's King. . . ."

XIII

A fortnight later, King Edward was gathered to his ancestors after scenes of unparalleled solemnity and splendour. Throughout his life Edward VII. had been keenly appreciative of the pomp and circumstance of his royal position, and it was by a singular stroke of irony that the greatest state pageant in which he was to take part should have been his own funeral. No fewer than eight

foreign monarchs were present in the stately and imposing obsequies at London and Windsor.

On Tuesday 17th May the body was removed from Buckingham Palace to lie in state for three days at Westminster Hall. The following day there was a steady stream of visitors to pay a last tribûte to the sovereign they had loved so well. At 11 A.M. the King of Portugal came with the Marquis de Soveral, who felt the King's death terribly. In the afternoon King George V. and the Kaiser drove to Westminster Hall. They stood for some time gazing at the coffin of King Edward. The Kaiser had brought with him a magnificent wreath; this he placed on the catafalque and knelt for some seconds in prayer, then he rose to his feet and glancing at King George grasped him by the hand. All the time there was a steady stream of all sorts and conditions of men and women to pay a last tribute of respect to their dead ruler. During that afternoon and the following days a vast multitude of people poured down the steps from the south end of the Hall and, dividing at the foot, passed by on either side of the coffin and out by the big doors into Palace Yard. It was a most impressive sight to behold this endless human stream, like a mighty river, coming down slowly and reverently passing along, taking a last silent farewell of the King whom they had honoured and loved.[1] The gloom of the ancient and historic place, the immobility of the gentlemen-at-arms and of the Indian officers and soldiers, who stood with bowed head and reversed arms on guard around the coffin, made an ineffaceable impression. The behaviour of the crowds was profoundly moving. All seemed to be imbued with a solemn civility that precluded any self-assertion or confusion or noise. Many women curtsied, others knelt and crossed themselves, and every one amongst those thousands felt a poignant sense of personal loss at the passing of the King.

On the 20th the stately funeral pageant moved through London. The streets from Westminster to Paddington were rich in purple; venetian masts wreathed in laurel leaves bordered the funeral route. Houses, hotels, clubs, and shops in the vicinity were fringed with purple or white. At Paddington even the girders and pillars of the platform were draped in funereal

[1] The crowd was said to have extended for six miles at one period, and it was estimated that 250,000 people passed through Westminster Hall during the three days of the lying-in-state.

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colours. The last sad progress through the streets was attended with all that was solemn and imposing, and the deep impression made by the death of the King was evidenced by the hushed sorrow of the silent multitudes—multitudes such as had not been seen in London streets since the death of Queen Victoria. Immediately behind the coffin were led the King's charger, with an empty saddle, and the King's alert little terrier, Caesar. Immediately behind Caesar rode a cavalcade such as rarely if ever had been seen before or since in the history of the world. Blazing with orders, resplendent in the scarlet and gold and blue and silver of military uniforms, came the nine kings and a vast number of princes and nobles.

That same day the royal remains were lowered into a vault in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, by the side of the King's eldest son, the Duke of Clarence. The last sad rites seemed to be doubly impressive. In this Chapel forty-seven years earlier King Edward had been married to the "Sea-kings' daughter from over the sea." As the body was lowered into the vault there were few who could restrain their tears. It is not, indeed, rare for kings to be buried with such pomp and circumstance as accompanied the funeral of Edward VII., but it is rare indeed for a king to be so sincerely and so deeply mourned by all who knew him.

CHAPTER XXXII

EPILOGUE

I

King Edward's short reign of nine and a quarter years presents distinctive features which no other reign, whether of long or short duration, exactly parallels. In foreign and home affairs alike the events which came within its scope possess an individual importance which helped to mould in startling fashion the future destinies of the nation and of the world. In those nine years great changes had taken place in England. Politically the most remarkable feature had been the advent to power in full and unchallenged strength in 1906 of the democratic Liberal party after an eclipse lasting in effect some twenty years, and after its advent to power its sweeping legislative reforms. But still greater changes were pending when King Edward died.

In home politics the King's interest was for the most part limited to the maintenance of the existing state of things; but he regarded with equanimity proposals of reform which he disliked, in the sanguine conviction that they would not go too far. The legislative changes which his ministers proposed he regarded as a part of *their* responsibilities. Apart from the services or matters affecting the Constitution he made no close study of details, and any comment which he offered was on behalf of some threatened interest, injury to which was apprehended by some one in his private circle of friends.

At home King Edward had not had many opportunities of displaying the rare gift of conciliation which had served him so well abroad. The constitutional checks combined with his discursive tastes and training left him indeed small opportunity of influencing effectually home political affairs. He died on the

eve of a dispute, upon which it would have been his duty to make a great decision. A greater difficulty than any with which he had been confronted lay ahead of him. It was fortunate for him, perhaps, that he escaped this supreme test of statesmanship. With all his genius, all his powers of persuasion, all his profound knowledge of men, and all his insight into the devious ways of diplomacy, Edward VII had not, to his chagrin, succeeded in reconciling the two great parties in the state. He exhausted himself in the effort, and that his failure was, in a measure, a factor in his last illness is proved by the delicate, yet clear, reference to it by the eminent medical men who drew up the report describing the stages of his malady.

The effect of the King's death on the political world was to allay for a time the storm which was gathering. It was almost universally felt that a bitter and acrimonious wrangle between the two Houses and between the two great political parties following immediately upon the national loss would be improper and unseemly; and that it was only fair to give the new King time to get into the saddle before calling upon him to take some decisive line which might be necessary if the crisis became acute. It was therefore arranged between the parties that a conference between them should take place. The moderates on either side favoured this development, but it was regarded with suspicion and dislike by the extremists of both parties. The conference soon got to work, but failed to achieve any settlement, and after another dissolution of Parliament Mr. Asquith advised King Edward's son and successor, King George V., to assent to the creation of peers to ensure that the will of the people should prevail, and King George V. was constitutionally correct in accepting such advice. The threat was enough. Rather than force the actual creations, a number of peers went so far as not merely to abstain from opposing the Parliament Bill but even to vote in the government lobby, intensely though they disliked the Bill. The result was the Parliament Act of 1911 by which the House of Lords was made definitely inferior to the Commons in legislation.

King Edward's short reign coincided with the advent of democracy. The artisan classes had begun to come into their own after the death of Palmerston. Twenty years later the franchise was extended to the rural labourers, but it was not

until the reign of King Edward that the aristocratic fortress was undermined and a really democratic régime inaugurated. After 1905 events moved with rapidity. No longer was policy dictated and expenditure curbed by the aristocracy allied to the wealthy middle class. The power passed to the mass of the middle class allied to the working class. A subtle change of temper now began to manifest itself, and to be reflected in the current legislation. Self-reliance had been the watchword of the Victorian era, but the doctrine of *laissez faire* had outlived its fleeting triumph and a collectivist tendency began to dominate legislation. But although Liberal legislation thus showed a socialistic strain, it did not go far enough for the Trade Unionists of the country. In the last years of Queen Victoria's reign a new party pledged to the idea of state socialism was born. During King Edward's reign it came through a puny childhood, in which it clung tightly to the apron strings of its Liberal mother, into its lusty teens. When King Edward ascended the throne the Labour Party numbered but ten members in the House of Commons; at his death that number had grown to forty-one. At the same time there sprang up a feeling of unrest among important sections of wage-earners, to whom political enfranchisement had not brought much satisfaction, which presented a grave problem. The aggregate wealth of the country was rapidly increasing, but the share which fell to the manual workers seemed to them inadequate, hence sporadic unrest which after King Edward's death resulted in not infrequent strikes.

Throughout the whole period forces were operating in Europe which were destined to issue in a world cataclysm that was to overshadow all other interests. This King Edward realised, and while attention in England was mainly concentrated on matters of domestic policy, King Edward's main interest was that of preserving the threatened peace of Europe.

II

By far the greatest change that took place during the reign of King Edward VII. was the abandonment of the policy of isolation in foreign affairs and the substitution of a policy of alliances or understandings with Powers whose interests seemed most closely akin to those of Britain. Both at home and abroad

misconceptions arose early—misconceptions which still persist—respecting the originating causes of the change in England's foreign policy. On the continent of Europe King Edward was, and indeed still is, supposed to have played a dominant part in determining the new phase of his country's foreign policy. That his influence was considerable has been abundantly manifested in the preceding narrative; yet it is equally clear that his influence was generally exerted within the strict limits allowed by the Constitution. That King Edward was well acquainted with the constitutional checks on an English ruler's personal activities is not to be gainsaid, but there were signs which indicated that the assertion of his personal views in affairs of state exceeded recent precedents, and the extent to which the popular conception of King Edward's exercise of personal power was justified by well-founded fact has been the main theme of this volume.

But it is necessary in tracing the growth of Great Britain's foreign policy during the reign to avoid the fallacy of attributing to it a comprehensive deliberateness which presumes a foresight beyond ordinary human powers Britain's foreign policy should not be credited with a very deliberate intention. To a large extent it was always a creature of circumstance, the fruit of spasmodic efforts to meet the event of the moment. No statesman claimed the gift of prophetic vision, or reckoned himself capable of forecasting the future. The two foreign secretaries of King Edward's reign—Lord Lansdowne, who held office from his accession until December 1905, and Sir Edward (afterwards Lord) Grey, Lord Lansdowne's successor—have both acknowledged that foreign policy is not made, but grows, and have admitted that as much credit or blame is due to him who scatters the seed as to those who water and tend the growing plant. A country's foreign policy must needs be largely dictated by events and sentiments developing beyond its borders and outside the sphere of its control. A well-considered opportunism is of the essence of every foreign policy.

From his youthful manhood King Edward had displayed an active interest in foreign affairs, and his foreign tours, not only during his reign but in earlier days, enabled him to gratify his predilection for keeping in personal touch with foreign rulers and statesmen, though he was fully aware of, and at times embarrassed

by, the exaggerated importance which was allotted by the press and the public to his movements abroad.

The evidence makes it plain that the King's character, predilections, and experience gave him an influence in Europe which materially encouraged the negotiation of diplomatic friendships. Yet familiarity with the general trend of events, which no individual personality could control, is needed to account for much in the new departure which coincided with King Edward's reign. The veteran tradition of England's isolation was weakened by the withdrawal from the stage of public affairs very early in the King's reign of its most redoubtable champion, Lord Salisbury. Throughout his protracted official career both as Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary during Queen Victoria's latest years of rule, Lord Salisbury had cogently preached, with the nation's approbation, the abiding virtues of insularity. On Lord Salisbury's retirement his power passed to statesmen of a more pliable and adaptable temperament, and the rigid creed of international aloofness lost its vogue. The only barrier to the opening of the road to such political rapprochements as harmonised with King Edward's early predispositions was public opinion in the various European countries. Germany hated and envied us ; France suspected us ; Russia looked upon us as the hidden enemy, lurking by night. Before the King died all had been changed, except in regard to Germany.

King Edward was a lover of peace, and had fully recognised in private conversation during the close of his mother's reign the terrors which would attend a great European war, such as the mutual suspicions and jealousies of the Great Powers seemed to threaten. Vague visions of friendship with France, with Germany, and with Russia then floated from time to time before his eyes, but when he ascended the throne his German nephew's professions of friendship, though framed in strong terms, seemed to conceal elements of deceit, while the hostile attitude of Muscovite statesmen seemed to preclude any arrangement with Russia. The French people gave no definite proof of modifying their habitual impatience and dislike of the *perfide Albion*.

King Edward's personal predilections had through youth and middle life strongly inclined him to an alliance with France, but during the course of the South African war the strength of French pro-Boer sympathies had held this hope in check, and

with his accession he cherished a presentiment, a view which his ministers shared, that if England were to abandon her attitude of isolation in Europe it was with Germany rather than with France that the first link between his own country and Europe might be formed. That hope having proved an illusion, owing to the attitude of the Kaiser, King Edward and his ministers turned to France.

Diplomatists who claimed more experience in diplomatic procedure fully believed that any advance on England's part towards France would at once lead to a breach of the peace with Germany. The King, as a sanguine man of the world, thought it was possible to come to terms with France whilst keeping Germany in a passable amity which his friendliness with France did not directly challenge.

His love of peace precluded any thought on his part of encouraging a warlike spirit between England and any other part of Europe. He hoped to improve friendly relations with all as soon as the South African war could be brought to a close. The fortune rather than the credit of the cessation of hostilities in South Africa belonged to him. That end was achieved in his reign and with his complete sympathy, but without his active assistance. The Entente Cordiale stands upon another footing, and it is not too much to say that the entente with France—the rock upon which German ambitions of world dominion were wrecked—was largely the work of Edward VII. That he was excellently equipped by nature and habit to assist this admirable design need not be said. For many years he had lived as familiarly in Paris as in London. The breadth of sympathy, the quick sensitiveness to outward impressions, the delight in colour and gaiety, the love of the theatre—all the qualities which win the favour of Paris—had long been his. And when in 1903 he went to France on his mission of peace, he might have hoped to succeed where failure seemed assured to any one else. Yet the task was difficult enough. The relations between France and England were strained to breaking point. The triumph was clearly a personal triumph for King Edward VII, and for him alone. He treated France as a friend with whom he had had a misunderstanding. And France, sensitive as himself, understood the spirit of his proffered compromise. The rest was easy. In a few months the bitterness of Fashoda and the hostility caused

by the Boer war gave way to the memory of a pleasant visit and the sense of a new security.

What King Edward did in France was even surpassed by the entente which was inaugurated with Russia. There the feeling of animosity, if less profound than in Paris, was at least established upon a sounder basis. The unfortunate event which had taken place in the North Sea could not be explained away as the figment of a suspicious imagination, and the British alliance with Japan was a reality. But once more King Edward's ease of manner won the day. He smoothed away the painful memories of the past, he showed the amicable possibilities of the future, and overcame the hesitancy of Russia. The abandonment, while Edward VII. was King, of the long-standing diplomatic isolation of Britain was complete. Not only had agreements been concluded with France, Russia, and Japan, but also with Spain, Portugal, the Scandinavian countries, Afghanistan, Koweit, and with the Sultan of Muscat and other minor Asiatic and African potentates. Throughout the reign the policy of successive governments had been influenced by the King's desire to remove causes of friction. Many kings, no doubt, have achieved greater things than this. No other king may boast of precisely this achievement.

Certain ingenious persons have supposed that, because Edward VII. professed an interest in foreign affairs, he was a Machiavelli in cunning and duplicity, and his enemies have detected the most highly complex motives in his simplest action. His policy was never Machiavellian. It was based upon a reasonable desire for tranquillity, and it was carried out openly and without afterthought. King Edward acquired his immense influence abroad by his unerring tact, his knowledge of human nature, and his great charm of manner—in fact by what is generally called the personal note. King Edward represented England to the Continent, and gained for her respect, and in some quarters affection. He was a concrete and likable embodiment of England. "No diamond," says Lord Redesdale, "could be more purely clear and honest than King Edward, and it was that pellucid truthfulness which made him so powerful in his relations with foreign sovereigns and statesmen: they knew that when they were dealing with him they had to do with a king as honest as Nathanael, a man in whom was no guile." One can

safely say that not a single European statesman or diplomatist, after having an audience with King Edward, ever left his Majesty's presence unimpressed by, or without dilating upon, his quick grasp of the question, his political sagacity, and his diplomatic flair.

In a certain sense his influence in Europe may have been exaggerated. In Germany, for instance, towards the close of his reign, the initiative in every step of British foreign policy was attributed to him, and every success and any failure put down to his credit or the reverse. This was clearly a mistaken idea, but on the other hand the very fact that these exaggerations were current and were believed by all classes from the highest to the lowest is in itself a proof that in the minds of foreigners the influence existed

Of course the extent to which a constitutional sovereign can actually direct the course of events must necessarily be limited. He cannot be his own Minister of Foreign Affairs, but what he can do is to use his unique position as a popular and accessible monarch to smooth away difficulties and create an atmosphere favourable to friendly discussion. That King Edward did do this—and often with conspicuous success—cannot possibly be denied, and it is equally certain that his work in this respect was of the greatest value to the responsible statesmen with whom the final solution of important international problems rested.

III

King Edward died in the fulness of fame, and friends cited the Latin tag, *felix opportunitate mortis*; but in the retrospect of subsequent years King Edward is seen to have been cut off suddenly and prematurely amid the full swirl of the movements which were revolving energetically about him in the last years of his life. In foreign affairs there was at his death a lull in the storm, but the fury of the elements was gathering fresh force.

The events of the period which immediately followed King Edward's reign—the Agadir crisis, the Turco-Italian war, the Balkan wars of 1912–13, and finally the great catastrophe of 1914—appear to give the impression that the reign of Edward VII. was an era of peace and tranquillity, modified only by Anglo-

German rivalry; but in truth the reign was a series of crises not inferior in gravity to those of the subsequent period. The year 1901 and the first part of the year 1902 found all unofficial Europe sympathising with the enemies of Great Britain in South Africa, and any serious diplomatic mistake on the part of Britain in those days might have resulted in European swords being flung into the balance against her. For two years there was an outward peace, but in 1904 the sinking of several British trawlers by the Russian fleet in the North Sea produced a situation that, but for the prompt apology of Russia and her keen desire not to add at that moment to her enemies, might have resulted in war. In the following year European antagonisms blazed up anew over the question of Morocco, the same question that was to be the cause of the Agadir crisis in 1911. Three years later (1908) the most serious crisis of the reign happened when Austria by a deliberate and cynical infraction of the Treaty of Berlin annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. In broad outline history repeated itself in 1911 and 1914. In 1914 as in 1908 it was the racial antagonism between Austria and Serbia, with the determination of Germany to support her ally Austria whether right or wrong, and the disregard by the Triple Alliance of treaties that impeded their territorial aggrandisement, that caused the final catastrophe. The crises of 1904, 1905, and 1908 were not a whit less serious than the crises of 1911 and 1914.

The years between the death of King Edward on 6th May 1910 and the outbreak of the Great War seem like an intermittent obsession of coming woe. So chaotic were they that it is hard, even now, to view in orderly sequence the events that filled them and to attach to them their correct historical importance. The main line of development was fixed by the determination of Germany to secure such an undisputed and indisputable dominance in Europe as would render possible the attainment of her new ambitions, industrial and political, in the rest of the world.

The Triple Alliance was still to all appearance in working order. Austria had become, in external affairs, a mere appendage of Germany. Once, and once only, had she asserted her right of independent action, in 1908 when, in defiance of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin, she annexed the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a shameless breach of the public law of Europe; but though the best German opinion was hostile, the

Kaiser and Prince Bülow were equal to the occasion. Not for the first time Austria—and the rest of the world—was to be shown her dependence as a "brilliant second" upon Germany. It was in reference to the part played by Germany, as accessory, if not before, at any rate after the fact, that the Kaiser a year later made in Vienna his famous "shining armour" speech; a variant upon the other themes of the "mailed fist" and the "well-ground sword"

It is interesting that Prince von Bulow should consider this incident to have been the supreme test, and to mark the final failure of "the encircling policy of Edward VII." which proved, he says, to be a "diplomatic illusion devoid of political actuality," so that in his view apparently that hypothetical policy ceased from 1909 to be a decisive or even a predominant factor in European diplomacy.

After the death of King Edward the European sky rapidly became overcast with the signs and portents of war, and when the storm did break all Germany cursed the name of King Edward as the true causer of the strife. He became a legend, like "Malbrook" in old France, or Napoleon in England a century earlier. "Popular hatred here," wrote Princess Blucher from Berlin, "is centred on the shade of King Edward VII.; he is supposed to have been the moving spirit in forming the encirclement of Germany."[1] The rising tide of hatred against one of the most lovable of our kings found an outlet a month after the outbreak of the Great War in a pamphlet in which King Edward's "fell purposes" were "revealed" by the German publicist, Reinhold Wagner—a writer of good reputation and a lieutenant-colonel in the German reserve—which was headed "King Edward VII. of England: the greatest criminal against humanity in the twentieth century."

"It was unquestionably King Edward," said the writer, "who is responsible for this war. He was the embodiment of the boundless selfishness and want of conscience of the British. Even as heir-apparent he brooded over plans to injure those who appeared to him dangerous to England. His first act when he ascended the throne was to set Japan on Russia, because Russia had sympathised with the Boers. The consequence of this," says the vitriolic pamphleteer, "was the long

[1] *An English Wife in Berlin*, 1920, p. 14.

Russo-Japanese war, which, greatly to the quiet delight of the English, resulted in the weakening of both combatants, and especially in cutting off the hopes of the Russians for a warm-water harbour."

Herr Wagner then comes to the first of King Edward's efforts to embroil or isolate Germany:

He utilised his journeys with this nefarious object in view. He first turned his attention to Portugal, where, under the guise of a visit of courtesy, he secured the promise of a couple of Portuguese divisions to strengthen a British landing corps. Then he went on to Rome, in order to take the wind out of the sails of the German Emperor, who had already announced his intention of visiting King Victor Emmanuel. Then to Paris, where the French readily fell into his net, even though they had not yet forgotten Fashoda.

Here is Herr Wagner's account of how King Edward "netted" the Spaniards:

It was done diplomatically. He even went so far as to play the matchmaker between King Alfonso and his niece, and the Protestant English were disgusted that the Princess was obliged to become a Catholic. The English marriage was intended to induce Spain, once so proud, to give no occasion to France to hold troops on the Pyrenean frontier, and in case of war to desist from driving the British out of Gibraltar, an act which is quite possible with modern artillery both from the north and from the Bay of Algeciras.

We are told how similar deep plans were laid to entangle Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in the meshes of King Edward's net, but it was not until 1905 that "the pears were ready to be shaken from the tree." The account which Herr Wagner gives of the events which led to the resignation of M. Delcassé attempts to prove that the British King was at the back of this "ambitious place-hunter," and that it was no fault of his that Europe was not plunged into a sanguinary war.

Herr Wagner had no doubt that the Anglo-Russian entente was the direct and personal work of the King, and in bringing about this rapprochement he continually had Germany in view as the ultimate enemy, and did everything in his power to deceive her as to his plans. It was a part of his plan of deception that he

visited Berlin in 1909. King Edward did his best to make himself popular in Berlin by a visit to the City Hall,

> but all the same there is a photograph in existence which shows the King in another light. The King has arrived at the Brandenburg Gate, and the mayor and councillors of Berlin are there to receive him. It is his entry to Berlin. Negligently the King lies back on his carriage cushions and looks down at the burgermeister standing by his side. There is a mocking smile in the King's eyes, as though he would say, "The poor people never see the devil, even when he has them by the collar."

This foolish pamphlet sought to prove that from the beginning of the reign of King Edward British policy had never wavered in a determination to push Germany into a corner:

> Whoever has followed British policy since that time cannot wonder that the incendiary Edward VII. rubbed his hands with glee at the end of his reign when he saw that the work of years was being completed, and that the flames had begun to ascend.
>
> It was his desire and aim that Germany's overseas trade should be destroyed, her navy annihilated, and her colonies taken from her. . . .
>
> To satisfy his greed and his craving for power, and to gratify personal malice against his nephew on the German Throne, Edward VII. did not scruple to set the world in a blaze and let loose the furies of war.

Wagner was not alone in his vitriolic abuse. The wilder heads of the German military party continued to attribute the cause of the war to King Edward VII., although he had been dead four years and four months when the war broke out, and events had completely altered the relations of the leading powers to one another. Even Bulow's successor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, deemed it advisable to add his tribute to the so-called "encirclement policy" of Edward VII., and in August 1915, when the war had been a year in progress, he made the following declaration at the Reichstag:

> King Edward VII. believed that his principal task was to isolate Germany. The encirclement by the Entente with openly hostile tendencies was drawn closer year by year. We were compelled to reply to this situation with the Greatest Armament Budget of 1913.

So it would seem that the spectre of encirclement which Prince von Bülow thought he had finally laid in 1909 continued for years afterwards to haunt the Wilhelmstrasse. This work disproves any such intention on the part of King Edward VII., and the logical inference is that if Germany had been as keen to preserve the peace of Europe as Edward VII., the Great War of 1914–18 might have been avoided.

There is a possibility that the death of King Edward VII., at a moment when internecine quarrels of Europe might have been appeased, hastened the catastrophe of 1914. Europe lost her leader. It may be doubted whether the Kaiser would have embarked on so daring a policy as that which produced the Agadir crisis had King Edward still lived, but although the great struggle might have been postponed it is doubtful whether it could finally have been averted. From the summer of 1910 onwards there seemed to be but one cause for deep anxiety—would England be ready for it when it came, and would she play without hesitation her probably decisive part in it?

IV

King Edward's life had spanned the period that marked the zenith of the monarchical system in Europe. All the great liberating movements of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century had been steered into monarchical channels. Even in Norway as late as 1905 the monarchical feeling triumphed over the republican. Beyond Switzerland and France (where the feeling in favour of a monarchy was still vigorous) Europe was ruled by a kingly caste, closely knit by intermarriage, which was regarded with an almost mystical awe by the majority of Europeans. Of this regal order Queen Victoria had been, towards the end of her reign, the acknowledged head. King Edward in his day filled the place of his mother. To almost every ruler of Europe he was related by ties of kindred and affinity. The Kaiser was his nephew, the Tsar of Russia was his wife's nephew, Frederick VIII. of Denmark and George I. of Greece were his wife's brothers, Leopold II. of Belgium was a distant cousin, and Carlos of Portugal and Ferdinand of Bulgaria remote kinsmen. Alfonso of Spain and the Crown Prince of Sweden had both married nieces of his, and

Haakon VII. of Norway his daughter. Excepting the Balkan states, with three European countries alone, Austria, Italy, and Holland, he had no direct ties of kinship. There was good justification for the title which the wits of Paris bestowed on him of "l'Oncle de l'Europe." Most of the European courts were the homes of his kinsfolk, whose domestic hospitality was always in readiness for him. In return it gratified his hospitable instinct to welcome his royal relatives beneath his roof. The implicit theory that supported the intermarrying of royal families in Europe was that their inter-relationship and their aloofness from their subjects was a mitigation of national and racial animosities. King, Tsar, and Emperor, uncle, cousin, nephew, would meet, and their meetings provided the lubrication of European affairs.

Within a few years of the King's death part of the system was to collapse. Germany, Russia, Portugal, Austria, even Turkey, were to abandon the monarchical cult in the disasters which overtook them, while even constitutional monarchies like Italy and Spain were to give way to dictatorships.

But the function, the significance of the British Crown in the British Empire has not diminished. For millions of people it is the golden and bejewelled link that binds the scattered outposts of Empire to the Motherland. The British monarchy is the outward and visible symbol of Empire unity, and Edward VII., by his charm of manner, his deep interest in all things appertaining to the welfare and strength of his country, added to the glory of the British throne. The prestige of the monarchy and its influence, in the prudent and sagacious hands of King Edward, waxed rather than waned. No great decision of state was taken without close discussion with the sovereign. Yet he did not and would not claim to deflect the clear decision of a strong cabinet But no cabinet, however strong, could afford to disregard the difficulties and doubts put forward by a sovereign whose experience and ability were those of King Edward. The historian, therefore, who appraises the development of the British Constitution must, on the whole, recognise that in a changing world the influence of the British monarchy has been preserved almost undiminished. The degree of the influence will no doubt vary with the personality of the sovereign. Queen Victoria had her special environment, King Edward had his.

V

Edward VII. eminently satisfied the contemporary conditions of kingship. No more thoroughly human citizen of the world ever sat upon a throne. On all public occasions his manner, speech, and gestures were admirably adapted to the requirements of his great rôle. There was nothing perfunctory in the temper of his public services, and his kindly nature and desire for the happiness of others touched the people's hearts.

He interpreted the duties of the Crown in the most liberal spirit. He felt and understood, as Queen Victoria did not, the impact of the modern movement, and his freedom from exclusiveness warmed the atmosphere of the court and brought it into touch with the general life. He was the first monarch who really appreciated the social problem, and saw that the court could not continue to remain in icy aloofness from the condition of the people. His genuinely aristocratic habit of mind may be said to have established a new relation between the monarchy and the people, and the transition which he effected entitles him to a distinguished place in the annals of royalty. Putting no trust in the mysteries of state, he tore down with a kindly hand the veil of secrecy that had hedged about the life and person of royalty and came forth to share the pleasures and pursuits of his people. He was familiar to all men, not only in the trappings of state, the importance of which he never underrated, but in the simplicity of a citizen, a sportsman, and a man of the world. Wherever he went he carried with him the same quick sympathy, the same ease of manner which served him in private intercourse with his friends. And abroad, as at home, he had grappled to his heart with hoops of steel a thousand friends, he had won the attachment of men who forgot in his amiable smile the jealousies of rival nations. In brief, he had become, without premeditation or sacrifice, the most popular man in Europe and the Empire, and thus achieved a position unique in the experience of history.

No king ever more truly commanded the affection and esteem of those by whom he was surrounded, for, paradoxical as the attribute may seem, no king was ever more truly a courtier. Numberless anecdotes might be cited to show how unfailingly tactful he was, with that tact which the French call "politeness of the heart." He never forgot a face, or never seemed to do so;

and to no one who was presented to him did he ever fail to say the right thing, or to leave an indelible impression of kindliness, graciousness, and courtesy. No one ever felt ill at ease in his presence, for he had brought the ability to put people at their ease to a fine art.

"In all the multiform manifestations," said Mr. Asquith in Parliament, "of our national and Imperial life, history will assign a part of singular dignity and authority to the great ruler whom we have lost. In external affairs his powerful personal influence was steadily and zealously directed to the avoidance not only of war, but of the causes and pretexts for war. He well earned the title by which he will always be remembered—the Peacemaker of the World. Within the boundaries of his own Empire, by his intimate knowledge of its component parts, by his broad, elastic sympathy not only with the ambitions and the aspirations but with the sufferings and hardships of all his people, by his ready response to any and every appeal, whether to the sense of justice or to the spirit of compassion, he won a degree of loyalty and of confidence which few sovereigns have ever enjoyed."

There were certain duties of a king which intimately chimed with his humour. He loved the splendid trappings of royalty. He took a keen delight in the pageantry of progresses and processions.

"He had," as Sir E. Grey remarked,[1] "in a very high degree the gift, proper and valuable in a Sovereign, for ceremonial. No one knew so well as he how ceremony should be arranged, ordered, and carried through in the manner most effective and impressive. By his own person, and by the part he took in it, he added dignity to it. In all this he performed to perfection the function that only the Sovereign can perform for the British Empire. This, however, is expected of the Sovereign, and, however well it is performed, unless there be something else, people are left satisfied but cold; they may even come to resent the pomp and display. King Edward had a rare, if not a unique, power of combining bonhomie and dignity. The bonhomie was warm and spontaneous, but it never impaired the dignity. His bearing was a perfect example of tact, ease, and dignity, and to this were added good sense and judgement that not only avoided mistakes, but perceived the thing that should be said to suit the occasion or please an individual. These gifts, valuable to

[1] *Memoirs*, i. p. 206.

any Sovereign, were particularly so in one who was the living centre of an Empire that included the self-governing Dominions and India.

"There was, however, something more that gave a spirit and aspect to it all, and this was due to his individual personality. Warm human kindness was of the very substance of the man. The misfortune or unhappiness of any one he knew caused him real discomfort; and he would do anything in his power to relieve it. The success or good fortune of a friend gave him lively pleasure and satisfaction. He had a capacity for enjoying life, which is always attractive, but which is peculiarly so when it is combined with a positive and strong desire that every one else should enjoy life too. These, it may be thought, are not very uncommon qualities, but King Edward had a peculiar power of making them felt. The crowd knew and recognised them. I imagine, for instance, that the humblest devotees of horse-racing in a Derby-day crowd knew that King Edward was there to enjoy the national festival in precisely the same spirit as themselves; that he wished them to enjoy it too; that their enjoyment was part of his own. There was, in fact, real sympathy and community of feeling between himself and his people. It was the same wherever he went. . . .

"He became intensely and increasingly popular, and, when he died, the unprecedented, long-drawn-out procession to pass the bier of state in Westminster Hall was a manifestation of genuine and personal sorrow as well as of national mourning. Popularity such as this centred in a constitutional Sovereign was an immense advantage to the State."

Never once did the King shirk a ceremonial duty. He insisted always on opening Parliament in person, and his passage from Buckingham Palace to Westminster was ever a gratification of his people's loyalty. He thought that his faithful subjects had a right to participate in the display and glitter of the court, whereof he was the centre. Nevertheless, this interest in the decorative arts of kingship was but the superficial merit of King Edward. No statesman of his time had a higher sense of duty. He spared neither himself nor his leisure. He worked for his country unceasingly, and was at his post early and late. It will always be remembered that even on the day of his death he was still ready to transact business, to give himself in the service of his country.

There was a oneness in his character which is the chief element of greatness. He cherished as King all the qualities which he had

displayed as Prince of Wales. He brought into the wider sphere of foreign policy the amiability, the dislike of harsh dealing, the determination to mitigate animosities, which was such a distinguishing feature of his reign. Although he had not the philosophic subtlety of a Balfour, nor the grasp and imaginative foresight of a Bismarck, if it was not for him to foretell the future or envisage the millennium, he at least saw with a rare lucidity what lay immediately in front of him. He disliked the strife of countries as bitterly as he disliked the conflict of parties, and he believed always that more might be done by accommodation than by force.

King Edward was not a great general like King Henry V., who was the conqueror rather than the friend of France. King Edward, on the other hand, has to his credit the diplomatic aid which he rendered to the linking together of England and France in bonds of amity and good understanding. But King Edward resembles Shakespeare's happy royal hero in many notable respects—in his joy of life, in his patriotism, in his broad humanity, in his expansive sociability, and perhaps at some points in his love of pleasure. If it was not given to Edward VII. to ride at the head of a victorious army, or to dominate the councils of the state with his own imperious policy, he showed what no other king has ever shown, that a finished man of the world may venture upon ground too dangerous for the political philosopher, and that even in the suspicious atmosphere of foreign courts manners still make man. He was determined to approach foreign countries in the same spirit in which he would approach his friends. Were they quarrelsome, then he would insist that they should make up their quarrel like men of honour. As duels may be avoided in society by the exercise of tact, so wars might (he thought) be avoided in Europe, if only ministers would listen to the voice of compromise. If it be not a counsel of heroism, it is at least a counsel of prudence and of good hap.

VI

The business of kingcraft is not an easy one, yet Edward VII. had it at his finger-tips. Though not imaginative, his kindness seemed to give him vision to see just where he could use his rank

to ease a difficult situation or to consolidate an uncertain one. Personally, he enjoyed throughout his monarchical career a combination of popularity and personal power which exceeded anything that could be put to the credit of his mother, or indeed of any of his predecessors for two centuries. The royal prerogative had appreciably diminished, but the power and prestige of the sovereign had grown enormously.

He was deeply impressed with the duties and obligations of his exalted station, and as King he had the supreme knack of doing always the right thing at the right moment. He was not only the right man in the right place, he was the right man in any place. It is impossible for a king to be a specialist in any art except that of being King—and in this respect King Edward was unequalled. He had acquired his proficiency as the result of long years of patient attention and inquiry—years which his detractors would have us believe were spent to exhaustion in the pursuit of frivolous occupations, and in the selfish sacrifice of duty to pleasure.

Intensely human, intensely lovable, finding a glowing interest in the kaleidoscopic *faites et gestes journaliers*, he had a verve, a zest, a joy of life that rendered him a happy and charming companion. He had none of the booklore and deep learning that characterised his principal ministers ; he had none of the sustained application and the patient study of technicalities that characterised his father. Like Burke, he believed that " a statesman requires rather a large converse with men and much intercourse in life than deep study of books." His sound and statesmanlike judgements were due to his wonderful memory and to his quick instinct—an instinct that gave him a dexterous appreciation of every crisis as it arose, and a half-unconscious sense of the vital elements in a situation. What made him an accomplished ruler was that he lived entirely in the present moment, and had no thoughts for anything beyond the immediate and actual reality. His genius was far-reaching and agile. Yet he could defer to the counsels of ministers and see their points of view ; yet again and again he would return to his own point. The history of the Anglo-Russian entente is an outstanding example of the proverb " Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre." Momentary impatience of delay or stupidity quickly passed, once he had disburdened himself of his displeasure.

His immense popularity was the result partly of his diplomatic and sporting successes, partly of his extraordinary personal affability and the genuine intensity with which he responded to and supported the interests of his countrymen. His intelligence embraced humanity, but did not rise above it. He thought what the man in the street thought, but he thought it with unequalled force. His opinion, his likes and dislikes, were swiftly formed, vigorously expressed, and based on a saving common sense. Not a little of his success was due to the fact that he really *looked* a king. His look, his smile, his dress, were all truly regal. Since the days of Charles II. the sovereigns of England, with the single exception of George IV., had always been unfashionable. King Edward broke the unfashionable precedents. As Prince of Wales he had been the acknowledged head of society; as King he was still the *arbiter elegantiarum*, the *soigné* example of the man about town—the perfect English gentleman.

The first impression of him was one of charming geniality, of an infectious bonhomie and good-humour. As one knew him better one realised the volatile temperament, the capability for anger, the intense burning patriotism, the astute diplomatic flair.

Of criticism he had his fair share—it was mainly directed at his private life and his so-called plans for the encirclement of Germany. Yet his defects were mainly the result of his upbringing. What lad, "cribbed, cabined, and confined" as he was up to the date of his marriage, would not have flung loose into the joyous intoxication of the social whirl? What man, so full of energy as he was, when debarred by virtue of his birth and his mother's jealousy from an all-absorbing occupation, would not have turned his energies and attention to the exhilarating attractions of the present? One's sympathy goes out to any man who, while debarred from any active participation in affairs, is at the same time the centre of a swarm of temptations such as few men have to endure. It is a tribute to the fibre of King Edward's character that, in spite of temptations which would have ruined a less virile man, he acquired the full art of kingship by his own tenacity of purpose. One can point to no dominating shadow behind the throne. Advisers he had in plenty, as this record shows, but always he took his own view—the view that Britain must live, that British interests must come first.

Literature and science he could not appreciate. His outlook was essentially practical. Not for him the "dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet"; not for him the tumultuous mighty harmonies of the poetic imagination; but for him essentially the blazing pageantry of court ceremonial, the activities and interests of an intensely patriotic sovereign. He had the temperament of a king, and as a king he was eminently successful. *Son métier était Roi.*

APPENDIX I

I

Memorandum on Questions which may be mentioned by the German Emperor to the King (prepared by Lord Lansdowne for King Edward)

London, 10*th August* 1901.

Chinese Negotiations.

His Majesty's Government have in the course of the Chinese negotiations insisted upon the necessity of including in the arrangements with regard to the indemnities some provision which would preclude China from hereafter making separate arrangements with individual Powers for the repayment of her share of the debt. The object desired was, of course, to interpose difficulties in the way of "backstairs" transactions to which the Chinese Government might lend itself for corrupt reasons, or into which it might be coerced for the purpose of alienating territory or conferring exclusive privileges, in consideration of the remission of portions of the debt.

Our views upon this subject had been freely explained to the representatives of the German Embassy, and we had every reason to suppose that they were concurred in by the German Government.

On the other hand it cannot be too clearly understood that we did not in the least desire to prevent China from paying off the whole, or a part, of the bonds before the expiration of the allotted time, provided this arrangement were made with the full knowledge and concurrence of the Powers, so as to prevent undue preference being accorded to any of them.

It was therefore with some surprise that we learn that when the Protocol was believed to be nearly ready for communication to the Conference by the Committee, the German representative supported the Russian Minister in voting for the exclusion of the clause which had been framed with the above objects, though Sir E. Satow had informed us that the German Minister had instructions, and a satisfactory formula would probably be found.

We also noticed with regret that the German representative did not support Sir E Satow in voting against a most inconvenient arrangement under which it was proposed that the conversion of the import duties from *ad valorem* to specific duties should be entrusted to an unwieldy Commission composed of representatives of all the Powers, each of which was to be at liberty to have a vote.

Germany, the United States, and Japan to act with Great Britain in further Negotiations.

We have expressed a hope that, in the important negotiations which will now have to be commenced under Article XI of the Joint Note, with regard to Commercial Treaties and Commercial Facilities, Germany, Japan, and the United States, as the Powers most largely interested in the trade of the Far East, will associate themselves with us. It has been suggested that the new negotiations should take place at Shanghai, and they will obviously stand a better chance of success if the representatives of the Powers less interested in Chinese trade are excluded. They can be given an opportunity of adhering at a later stage

Claims of German Shareholders in Netherlands South African Railway Company.

Baron Eckardstein has intimated to me that Count von Bulow earnestly desires a settlement of the claims of the shareholders in the Netherlands South African Railway Company and of the claims arising out of the deportations which took place from South Africa [1]

Attention has been given to both of these questions. I have communicated to Baron Eckardstein confidentially a proposal for an amicable settlement with the German shareholders, upon terms which he will no doubt report to the German Government.

The investigation of the claims of persons deported from South Africa is proceeding before Mr. Milvain's Commission, but up to yesterday no German claims had been submitted to the Commissioners This is very unfortunate. There have been pourparlers with regard to the possibility of a settlement of all these claims out of court for a lump sum, and in principle I am not averse to this idea and to thereby avoiding the expense and trouble of a prolonged inquiry. It would, however, be very difficult for His Majesty's Government to consent to such a settlement until the Commission had had an opportunity of investigating some, at all events, of the German claims, and forming an opinion with regard to them.

[1] A long footnote here refers to N.S.A. Railway and shares.

Koweit.

It is possible that the question of Koweit may be mentioned to His Majesty.

His Majesty is aware that His Government have entered into special arrangements with the Sheikh, under which the latter is forbidden to alienate territory without their consent. The nature of this arrangement was fully explained in 1900 by Sir Nicholas O'Conor to Baron von Marschall at Constantinople. There are rumours that the Turkish Government intend to attack the Sheikh, and should these rumours prove to be well founded, it may be necessary to remind the Porte of the language held by Sir N. O'Conor in 1900 to the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, when he said that Her Majesty's Government did not desire to interfere with the *status quo* or with the Sultan's authority in those parts, but that they could not in view of their great interests in the Persian Gulf view with indifference any action which would alter the existing condition of affairs or give another Power special rights or privileges over territory belonging to the Sheikh of Koweit with whom Her Majesty's Government had certain agreements. He added that he trusted His Excellency would bear these remarks in mind in case any proposals were made conflicting with our interests, and he did so the more confidently as such proposals would probably also conflict with the interests of Turkey.

Should anything be said to His Majesty with regard to German interests in the neighbourhood of Koweit, I suggest that an assurance might be given that we have no desire to refuse facilities to the German Government for coming to Koweit as the terminus of the Trans-Caspian railway, but that, in that case, a previous understanding with His Majesty's Government would be indispensable.

Morocco.

With regard to Morocco, the policy of the German and British Governments would appear to be identical. Both desire the maintenance of the *status quo*, and both would probably resent any indignity offered to the Moorish envoy who lately visited, and was received with honours, at the German and British Courts.[1]

II

The German Memorandum prepared for the Kaiser

A "Memorandum on Questions which may be mentioned by the German Emperor to the King" had been handed by His Majesty

[1] *Die grosse Politik,* xvii. p. 124 *seq.*

the King to His Majesty the Emperor. The Imperial German Government notes with satisfaction the manifest desire of His Britannic Majesty's Government to come to an understanding on the principal pending questions, and avails itself of this opportunity to explain the German point of view with regard to each one of the questions dealt with in the Memorandum.

I. Chinese Negotiations.

The instructions given to the German Minister in Pekin have always been of a conciliatory nature. His Imperial Majesty's Government have been guided throughout the Chinese troubles by a desire to prevent a rupture between the Powers Instructions of too technical or too special a nature have, as far as possible, not been given to Herr von Mumm

According to the latest intelligence from Pekin, an understanding has, in the meantime, been arrived at concerning the questions hitherto disputed, and the final Protocol has meanwhile been submitted to the Chinese Government for signature.

II Germany, the United States of America, and Japan to act with Great Britain in future Negotiations.

The proposal for a joint action of Germany, Great Britain, the United States, and Japan in the negotiations which will now have to be commenced with regard to Commercial Treaties and Commercial Facilities deserves and will meet with the most serious consideration on the part of His Imperial Majesty's Government. At the same time it appears indispensable to examine—with the co-operation of His Imperial Majesty's Minister in Pekin—the question whether or to what extent the exclusion of those Powers which are supposed to have a lesser interest in Chinese matters might have the effect of drawing those powers closer together and thus forming a new and undesirable groupment of European States in the Far East.

III. Claims of German Shareholders in Netherlands South African Railway Company.

On first perusal of the British proposals, the following two conditions appear to be particularly onerous :

(i.) That shareholders should receive a compensation of only £130 . . .

[The Memorandum goes on to deal with conditions of repayment of shareholders, and the claims of German subjects deported from South Africa.]

(iii.) (*Koweit.*) With regard to the third point, the German Government wish to state that they have no desire to claim any sovereign or suzerain rights or privileges over territory belonging to the Sheikh of Koweit. This port has an importance for Germany merely as the proposed terminus of the Bagdad railway. Germany has had no motive for inquiring into the questions of sovereignty or suzerainty with regard to this district, but wishes to point out that hitherto the Sultan in Constantinople has been regarded as the undisputed Sovereign of the Koweit territory. In so far as His Britannic Majesty's Government do not either "desire to interfere with the Sultan's authority in those parts," there appears to exist no difference of opinion between the German and British Governments on this point. The exact nature of the arrangements existing between the British Government and the Sheikh of Koweit is not fully clear to the German Government, notwithstanding the explanations given in 1900 by Sir Nicholas O'Conor to Baron von Marschall at Constantinople. As, however, these arrangements appear to be limited to the sale of ground by the Sheikh, Herr Dr. von Siemens, the chief manager of the Bagdad Railway Company, will be instructed to come to a previous understanding with the British Government when the time for purchasing land for a railway terminus and a landing place at Koweit shall have come. In case this arrangement should not satisfy the British Government, the German Government will most likely express their desire to be given full cognisance of the arrangements entered into between the British Government and the Sheikh of Koweit.

IV. Morocco.

In Morocco we follow a policy of reserve. The Morocco question by itself is not sufficiently important for us to justify a policy by which Germany might incur the risk of serious international complications.[1]

[1] *Die grosse Politik*, xvii. p. 127 *seq.*

APPENDIX II

The King's Message to the Princes and Peoples of India on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Assumption by the Crown of the Direct Government of India, 1st November 1908

It is now fifty years since Queen Victoria, my beloved mother, and my august predecessor on the throne of these realms, for divers weighty reasons, with the advice and consent of Parliament, took upon herself the government of the territories theretofore administered by the East India Company I deem this a fitting anniversary on which to greet the Princes and Peoples of India, in commemoration of the exalted task then solemnly undertaken. Half a century is but a brief span in your long annals, yet this half-century that ends to-day will stand amid the floods of your historic ages, a far-shining landmark. The proclamation of the direct supremacy of the Crown sealed the unity of Indian government and opened a new era. The journey was arduous and the advance may have sometimes seemed slow, but the incorporation of many strangely diversified communities, and of some three hundred millions of the human race, under British guidance and control has proceeded steadfastly and without pause. We survey our labours of the past half-century with clear gaze and good conscience.

Difficulties, such as attend all human rule in every age and place, have risen up from day to day. They have been faced by the servants of the British Crown with toil and courage and patience, with deep counsel and a resolution that has never faltered nor shaken. If errors have occurred, the agents of my government have spared no pains and no self-sacrifice to correct them , if abuses have been proved, vigorous hands have laboured to apply a remedy.

No secret of empire can avert the scourge of drought or plague, but experienced administrators have done all that skill and devotion are capable of doing to mitigate those dire calamities of Nature. For a longer period than was ever known in your land before, you have escaped the dire calamities of war within your borders. Internal peace has been unbroken.

In the great charter of 1858 Queen Victoria gave you noble

assurance of her earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all resident therein. The schemes that have been diligently framed and executed for promoting your material convenience and advance—schemes unsurpassed in their magnitude and boldness—bear witness before the world to the zeal with which that benignant promise has been fulfilled.

The rights and privileges of the Feudatory Princes and Ruling Chiefs have been respected, preserved, and guarded, and the loyalty of their allegiance has been unswerving. No man among my subjects has been favoured, molested, or disquieted by reason of his religious belief or worship. All men have enjoyed protection of the Law. The Law itself has been administered without disrespect to creed or caste, or to usages and ideas rooted in your civilisation; it has been simplified in form, and its machinery adjusted to the requirements of ancient communities slowly entering a new world.

The charge confided to my government concerns the destinies of countless multitudes of men now and for ages to come, and it is a paramount duty to repress with a stern arm guilty conspiracies that have no just cause and no serious aim. These conspiracies I know to be abhorrent to the loyal and faithful character of the vast hosts of my Indian subjects, and I will not suffer them to turn me aside from my task of building up the fabric of security and order. Unwilling that this historic anniversary should pass without some signal mark of royal clemency and grace, I have directed that, as was ordered on the memorable occasion of the Coronation Durbar in 1903, the sentences of persons whom our Courts have duly punished for offences against the law should be remitted, or in various degrees reduced, and it is my wish that such wrongdoers may remain mindful of this act of mercy and may conduct themselves without offence henceforth.

Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens, and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India.

From the first, the principle of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when, in the judgement of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my Counsellors, that principle may be prudently extended. Important classes among you, representing ideas that have been fostered and encouraged by British rule, claim equality of citizenship and a greater share in legislation and government. The politic satisfaction of such a claim will strengthen, not impair, existing authority and power.

Administration will be all the more efficient if the Officers who conduct it have greater opportunities of regular contact with those whom it affects, and with those who influence and reflect common opinion about it. I will not speak of the measures that are now being diligently framed for these objects. They will speedily be made known to you and will, I am very confident, mark a notable stage in the beneficent progress of your affairs.

I recognise the valour and fidelity of my Indian troops, and at the New Year I have ordered that opportunity should be taken to show in substantial form this my high appreciation of their martial instincts, their splendid discipline, and their faithful readiness of service.

The welfare of India was one of the objects dearest to the heart of Queen Victoria. By me, ever since my visit in 1875, the interests of India, its Princes and Peoples, have been watched with an affectionate solicitude that time cannot weaken. My dear Son, the Prince of Wales, and the Princess of Wales, returned from their sojourn among you with warm attachment to your land, and true and earnest interest in its well-being and content These sincere feelings of active sympathy and hope for India on the part of my Royal House and Line only represent the deep and united will and purpose of the people of this Kingdom.

May divine protection and favour strengthen the wisdom and mutual good-will that are needed for the achievement of a task as glorious as was ever committed to rulers and subjects in any State or Empire of recorded time.

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THE END

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